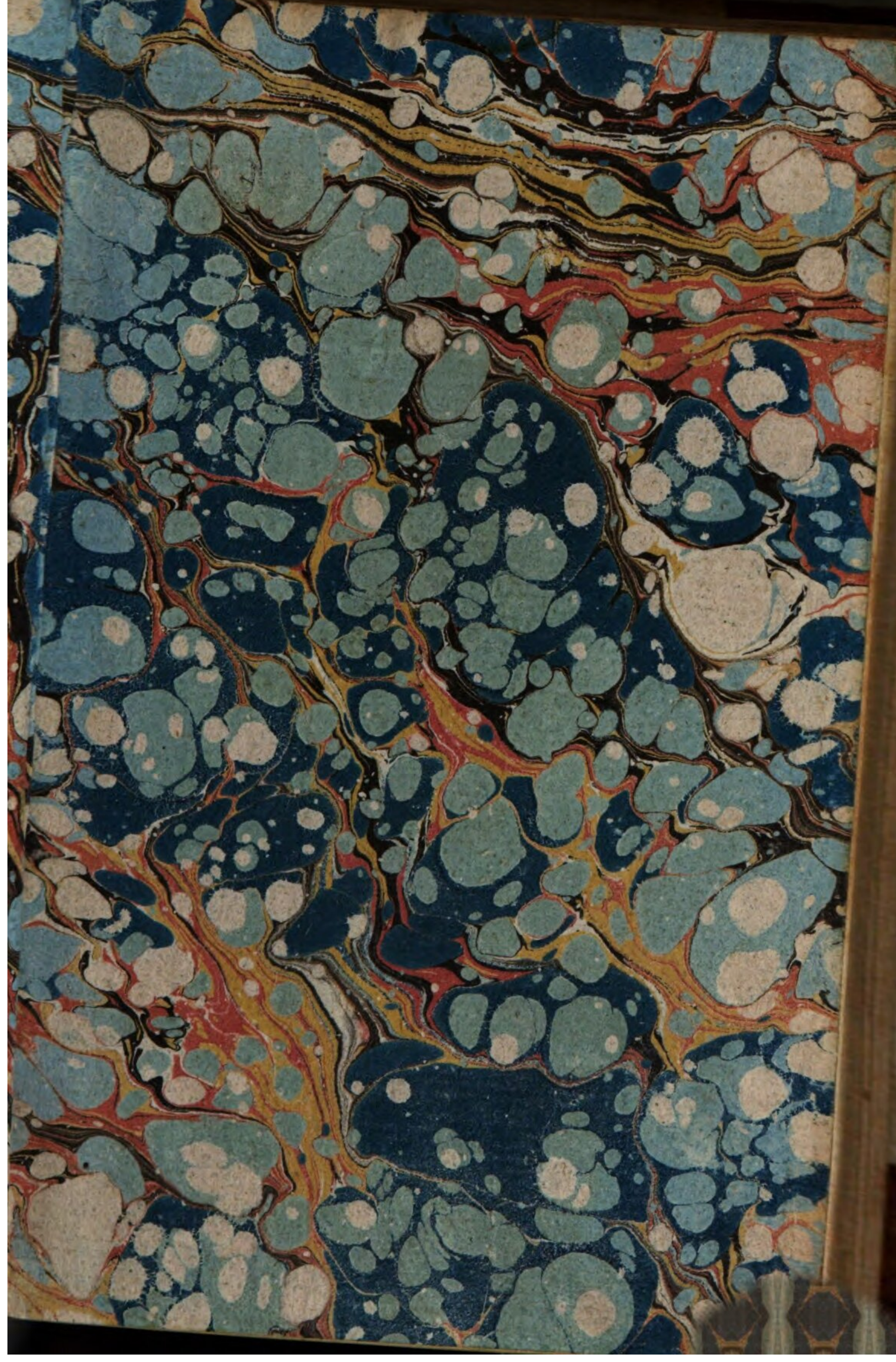










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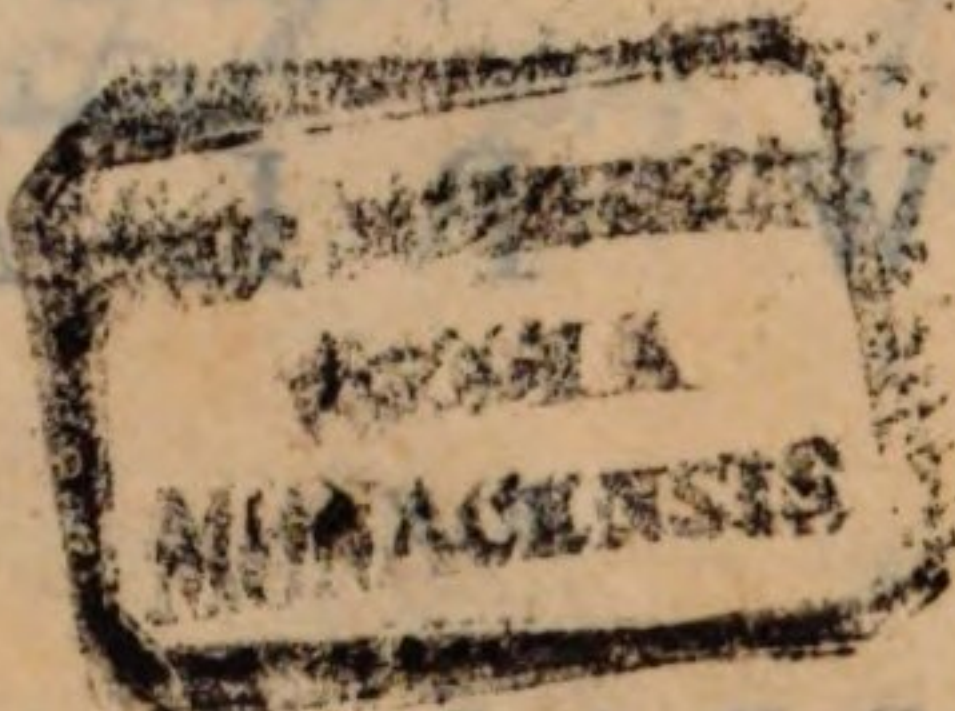


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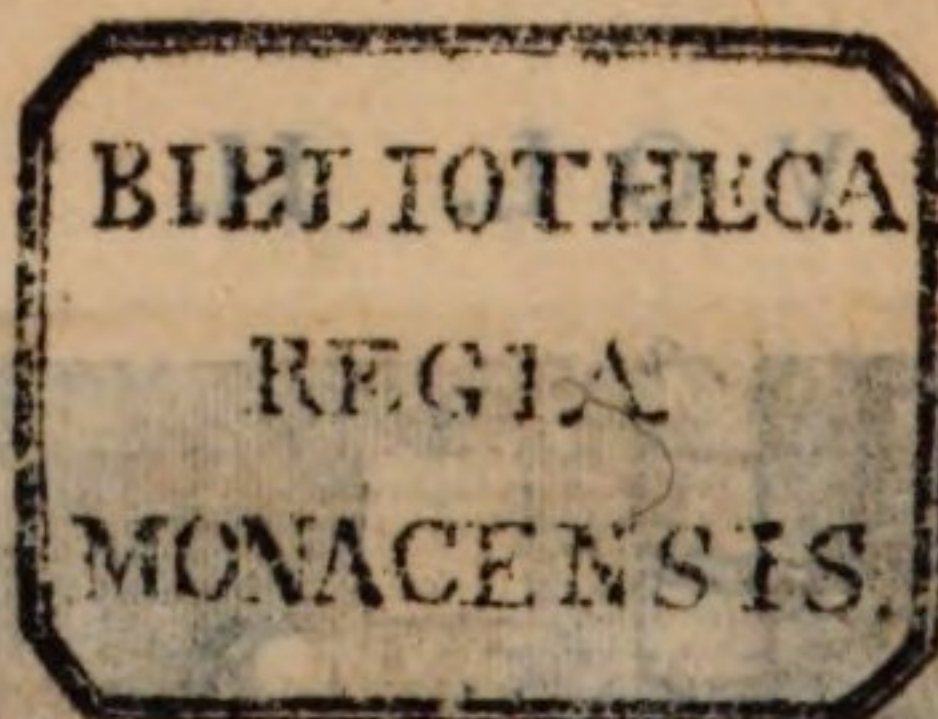
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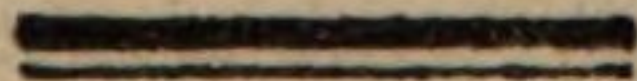
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Dramatic Personae.

MEN.

MR. OLDWORTH. THE

OLD GROVE. PAINTER.

MAID OF THE OAKS,

DRUID.

MR. DUBRELL. SHEPHERD.

A DRAMATIC

WOMEN.

ENTERTAINMENT.

LADY BARBARA. MARIA.

DOON. SHEPHERDESSES.

GARDENERS. CARPENTERS,

PAINTERS, &c.

VOL. II.

A

Dramatis Personae.

MEN.

Mr. OLDWORTH. HURRY.

Old GROVEBY. PAINTER.

**Sir HARRY GRO- ARCHITECT.
VEBY. DRUID.**

Mr. DUPELEY. SHEPHERDS.

WOMEN.

Lady BAB LAR- MARIA.

DOON. SHEPHERDESSES.

**GARDENERS, CARPENTERS,
PAINTERS, &c.**

THE
MAID OF THE OAKS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

PART OF AN ORNAMENTED FARM.

*Enter Sir HARRY GROVEBY and Mr.
DUPELEY, meeting.*

Sir Harry. **D**EAR Charles, welcome to England! and doubly welcome to Oldworth's Oaks—Friendship I see has wings, as well as love—you arrive at the moment I wished; I hope in your haste you have not forgot a fancy dress.

Dupeley. No, no; I am a true friend, and prepar'd for all your whimsies, amorous and poetical. Your summons found me the day after my arrival, and I took post immediately—next to my eagerness to see you, was that of being in time for the Fête Champêtre—Novelty and pleasure are the beings I pursue—They have led me half the world over already, and for ought I know they may sometime or other carry me to the Otaheite.

4 THE MAID OF THE OAKS.

Sir Harry. You have pursued but their shadows—here they reign, in the manners of this New Arcadia, and the smiles of the sweet Maid of the Oaks.

Dupeley. Who, in the name of curiosity, is she that bears this romantic title? for your letter was a mere eclogue; the devil a thing could I make out, but a rhapsody upon rural innocence, and an invitation from a gentleman I did not know, to an entertainment I never saw—What, are we to have a representation of the Pastor-fido in a Garden?

Sir Harry. The Pastor-fido is before you *in propria persona*; the business of the day is a wedding, and Charles Dupeley is invited to see his friend, Sir Harry Grove-bey, united to the most charming of her sex.

Dupeley. The devil it is! What a young fellow of your hopes and fortune, sacrificed to a marriage of romance! But, prithee, relieve my impatience, and tell me who she is.

Sir Harry. An orphan ward of the worthy old gentleman, at whose seat you now are: His character is singular, and as amiable in its way as her's. Inheriting a great estate, and liberally educated, his disposition led him early to a country life, where his benevolence and hospitality are boundless; and these qualities, joined with an imagination

nation bordering upon the whimsical, have given a peculiar turn to the manners of the neighbourhood, that, in my opinion, degrades the polish of courts—but judge of the original.

Enter OLDWORTH.

Mr. Oldworth, I present you my friend: he is just arrived from abroad; I will not repeat how much he is worthy of your friendship.

Oldworth. To be worthy of your's, Sir Harry, is the best recommendation. [*To Dupeley*—Sir, your friend is going to receive from my hands, a lovely girl, whose merit he has discern'd and lov'd for its own sake: Such nuptials should recal the ideas of a better age; he has permitted me to celebrate them upon my own plan, and I shall be happy to receive the judgment of an accomplish'd critic.

Dupeley. Sir, by what I already see of Oldworth's Oaks, and know of the character of the master, I am persuaded the talent most necessary for the company will be that of giving due praise.

Enter HURRY.

Hurry. Lord, Sir, come down to the building directly—all the trades are together by the ears—it is for all the world like the tower of Babylon—they have

6 THE MAID OF THE OAKS.

drove a broad-wheel waggon over two hampers of wine, and it is all running among lilies and honey-suckles—one of the cooks stumbled over one of the clouds, and threw a ham and chickens into a tub of white wash—a lamp-lighter spilt a gallon of oil into a cream'd apple-tart, and they have sent for more roses, and there is not one left within twenty miles.

Oldworth. Why, honest Hurry, if there is none to be had, you need not be in such haste about 'em—Mercy on us! my Fête has turn'd this poor fellow's head already, he will certainly get a fever.

Hurry. Get a favour, Sir!—why there has not been one left these three hours; all the girls in the parish have been scrambling for them, and I must get a hundred yards more—Lord a mercy! there is so much to do at once, and nobody to do it, that it is enough to moider one's head.

[*Oldworth and Hurry talk together.*]

Dupeley. Ha, ha, ha, is this one of the examples you produce, Sir Harry, to degrade the polish of courts?

Sir Harry. If I did, have you never met with a courtier in your travels, as busy, as important, and as insignificant, upon yet more trifling occasions?—Why, my friend Hurry's is the true bustle of an antichamber, with this difference, that there is rather
more

more attachment and fidelity to the master at the bottom of it.

[*During this speech Hurry is expressing by his action his impatience for Oldworth to go.*

Hurry. Law, Sir, if you loiter longer, I tell you they will all be at loggerheads—they were very near it when I came away.

[*Exit.*

Oldworth. Mr. Dupeley, you'll excuse me—Hurry convinces me, my presence is necessary elsewhere—this is a busy day!

Dupeley. The greatest compliment you can pay me, is not to look upon me as a stranger.

Oldworth. I forgot to tell you, Sir Harry, that Lady Bab Lardoon is in the neighbourhood, and I expect her every moment—she promised to be with us long before the hour of general invitation.

Dupeley. Who is she, pray?

Sir Harry. Oh, she's a superiour!—a phoenix!—more worthy your curiosity than any object of your travels!—She is an epitome, or rather a caricature of what is call'd *very fine life*, and the first female gamester of the time.

Oldworth. For all that, she is amiable—one cannot help discerning and admiring the natural excellence of her heart and understanding; though she is an example, that neither is proof against a false education,

8 THE MAID OF THE OAKS.

and a rage for fashionable excesses—But when you see her, she will best explain herself—This fellow will give me no rest.

HURRY *returns.*

Hurry. Rest, Sir, why I have not slept this fortnight; come along, Sir, pray make haste—nothing's to be done without it.

Oldworth. Nor with it, honest Hurry.

[*Exit with HURRY.*

Dupeley. A cunning old fellow, I warrant!—with *his ward and his love of merit for its own sake*—ha, ha, ha!—pr'ythee how came your acquaintance in this odd family?

Sir Harry. Don't sneer, and I will tell you—By mere chance; in a progress of amusement to this side of the country: The story is too delicate for thy relish, suffice it that I came, saw, and lov'd—I laid my rank and fortune at the fair one's feet, and would have married instantly; but that Oldworth opposed my precipitancy, and insisted upon a probation of six months absence—It has been a purgatory!

Dupeley. All this is perfectly *en regle* for a man of home education—I should like to see the woman that could entangle *me* in this manner.

Sir Harry. There is not a fellow in England has a more susceptible heart: You may have learnt in your foreign tour to disguise it, but if you have lost it, put all your
acqui-

acquisitions together, and the ballance will be against you.

Dupeley. I have learned at least, not to have it imposed upon: Shew me but a woman from an Italian Princess, to a figurante at the French opera; or change the scene, and carry me to the rural nymphs from a vintage in Burgundy, to a dance round a may-pole at Oldworth's Oaks—and at the first glance I will discover the whole extent of their artifice, find their true lure, and bring them to my hand as easily as a tame sparrow.

Sir Harry. And pray, my sagacious friend, upon what circumstances have you formed your suspicions that I am more likely to be impos'd upon than yourself?

Dupeley. Upon every one I have seen and heard; but above all upon that natural propensity of every true homebred Englishman, to think one woman different from another—Now I hold there is but one woman in the world.

Sir Harry. I perfectly agree, and Maria is that charming one.

Dupeley. Ay, but Maria, and Lady Bab, and Pamela Andrews, and Clarissa Harlowe, and the girl that steals a heart in a country church, or she that picks your pocket in Covent-Garden, are one and the same creature for all that—I am always too quick for them, and make fools of them first—

Oh

10 THE MAID OF THE OAKS.

Oh do but try them by the principle I have laid down; you'll find them as transparent as glass.

Sir Harry. My own principle will answer my purpose just as well; with that perspective I have looked through the woman, and discovered the angel; and you will do the same when you see her, or never brag of your eye-sight more.

Dupeley. Rhapsody and enthusiasm!—I should as soon discover Mahomet's seventh heaven; but what says your uncle, old Groveby, to this match?

Sir Harry. Faith I have asked him no questions, and why should I? when I know what must be his answer.

Dupeley. Oh, he can never disapprove a passion that soars above the stars!

Sir Harry. He has all the prejudices of his years, and worldly knowledge; the common old Gentleman's character.—You may see it in every drama from the days of Terence, to those of Congreve; though not perhaps with quite so much good humour, and so little obstinacy as my Uncle shews. He is ever most impetuous, when most kind; and I dare trust his resentment will end with a dramatic forgiveness. Should it not, I may have pride in the sacrifice of his estate, but no regret.—So much for fortune, Charles—are there
any

THE MAID OF THE OAKS. II

any other means to reconcile me to your approbation?

Dupeley. 'Gad I know but one more—Have you laid any plan for succeeding at the divorce-shop next winter? It would be some comfort to your friends, to see you had a retreat in your head.

Sir Harry. Charles, I have listened to your raillery with more patience than it deserves, and should at last be out of humour with such an importation of conceit and affectation, if I was not sure your good sense would soon get the better of it. This is called knowing the world—to form notions without, perhaps, ever seeing a man in his natural character, or conversing with a woman of principle: and then, for fear of being imposed upon, be really dup'd out of the most valuable feelings in human nature, confidence in friendship, and esteem in love.

Enter HURRY.

Hurry. Lord, Sir, I am out of breath to find you, why, almost every thing is ready, except yourself, and Madam Maria is gone to the Grove, and she is so dress'd, and looks so charming!

Sir Harry. Propitious be the hour!—here, Hurry, find out this Gentleman's servant, and shew him where he is to dress.

[Exit.
Dupeley.

Dupeley. Oh, take care of yourself, Corydon, the first, I shall be time enough; Hurry shall first shew me a little of the preparation—what is going forward here?
[Approaching the side scene.]

Hurry. Hold, Sir, not that way; my Master lets no body see his devices and figaries there.

Dupeley. Why, what is he doing there, Hurry?

Hurry. Doing!—as you are a gentleman, I will tell you what he is doing—I hope no body hears us. *[Looking about.]* Why, he is going to make the sun shine at midnight, and he is covering it with a thousand yards of sail-cloth, for fear the rain should put it out—lord, such doings!—here, this way, your honour.

Dupeley. But hark'ee, honest Hurry, do stand still a moment to oblige me.

Hurry. Stand still, Sir!—lord, Sir, if I stand still, every thing stands still; and then what a fine *Sham-Peter* should we make of it! *[Always restless.]*

Dupeley. You seem to know every thing here?

Hurry. To be sure I do—I am no fool I believe—what think you, Sir?

Dupeley. He that takes you for a fool, is not over wise, I warrant him; therefore let me ask you a question or two.

Hurry.

Hurry. To-morrow, Sir, with all my heart; but I have so many questions to ask myself, and so many answers to give, that I have not five minutes to spare.

Dupeley. Three minutes will do my business: Who is this Maid of the Oaks, friend Hurry?

Hurry. A young lady, Sir.

Dupeley. I thought as much. [Smiling.] You are a courtier, friend Hurry.

Hurry. I court her!—heaven forbid!—she's going to be married, Sir.

Dupeley. Well said simplicity! If you won't tell me *who* she is, tell me *what* she is?

Hurry. She is one of the most charmingest, sweetest, delightfulest, mildest, beautifulest, modestest, genteelest, never to be prais'd enough young creature in all the world!

Dupeley. True courtier again! Who is her father, pray?

Hurry. It's a wise child that knows its own father; lord bless her! she does not want a father.

Dupeley. Not while Mr. Oldworth lives.

Hurry. Nor when he is dead neither; every body would be glad to be her father, and every body wishes to be her husband; and so, Sir, if you have more questions to ask, I'll answer them another time, for I am wanted here, and there, and every where.

[Bustles about.]

Dupeley.

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Dupeley. Shew me my chamber to dress, and I'll desire no more of you at present.

Hurry. Bless your honour for letting me go; I have been very miserable all the while you were talking to me—this way, this way, Sir. [Exit.

Dupeley. What a character!—yet he has his cunning, though the simplest swain in this region of perfect innocence, as Sir Harry calls it—ha, ha, ha! [Exit.

S C E N E II.

An out-side Building, workmen of all sorts passing to-and-fro.

Architect. [As speaking to persons at work behind the Side-scene.] Come, bustle away, my lads, strike the scaffold, and then for the twelve o'clock tankard; up with the rest of the festoons there on the top of the columns.

First Gardener. Holloa! you Sir! where are you running with those flowers?

Second Gardener. They're wanted for the Arcades; we can have no deceit there—if you want more here, you may make them of paper—any thing will go off by candle-light.

First Lamp-lighter. [running.] They want above a hundred more lamps yonder, for the illumination of the Portico.

Second Lamp-lighter. Then they may get tallow-candles; I shan't have enough to make

make the sky clear in the saloon—that damn'd Irish painter has made his ground so dingy, one might as soon make his head transparent as his portico.

Enter Irish PAINTER.

Painter. Arrah! what is that you say of my head, Mr. Lamp-lighter?

Sec. Lamp-lighter. I say you have spoil'd the transparency by putting black, where you should have put blue.

Painter. [*Dabbing his brush across his face.*] There's a black eye for you; and you may be thankful 'you got it so easily—Trot away with your ladder upon your shoulder, or the devil fire me but you shall have black and blue both, my dear.

Architect. [*returning.*] Good words, good words, gentlemen; no quarrelling—Your servant, Mr. O'Daub; upon my word you have hit off those ornaments very well—the first painter we have here could not have done better.

Painter. No faith, I believe not, for all his hard name; sure O'Daub was a scene painter before he was born, though I believe he is older than I too.

Architect. You a scene painter!

Painter. Ay, by my soul was I, and for foreign countries too.

Architect. Where was that pray?

Painter.

16 THE MAID OF THE OAKS.

Painter. Faith, I painted a whole set for the Swish, who carries the temple of Jerusalem about upon his back, and it made his fortune, though he got but a half-penny a-piece for his shew.

Architect. [ironically.] I wish we had known your merits, you should certainly have been employ'd in greater parts of the work.

Painter. And, by my soul, it would have been better for you if you had—I would have put out Mr. *Lanternbug's* stars with one dash of my pincil, by making them five times more bright—Ho! if you had seen the sign of a setting sun, that I painted for a linen-draper, in Bread-street, in Dublin—Devil burn me but the *Auroree* of O'Guide was a fool to it.

Archit. O'Guide!—who is he? Guid-o, I suppose you mean.

Painter. And if he has an O to his name, what signifies whether it comes before or behind—Faith I put it like my own of O'Daub, on the right side, to make him sound more like a gentleman—besides it is more melodious in the mouth, honey.

Enter CARPENTERS, &c.

First Carp. Well, Sir, the scaffold's down, and we are woundy dry—we have toil'd like horses.

Architect.

Architect. Rest you merry, Master Carpenter—take a draught of the 'Squire's liquor, and welcome, you shall swim in it, when all is over.

Painter. Fait let me have one merry quarter of an hour before we at it again, and it will be no loss of time neither—we will make the next quarter after, as good as an hour—and the *shampater* will gain by the loss.

First Gard. Well said, O'Daub! and if you will give us the song you made, the quarter of an hour will be merrier still.

Architect. Can you rhyme, O'Daub?

Painter. Yes fait, as well as paint—all the difference is, I do one with a brush, and t'other with a pen; I do one with my head, and both with my hands—and if any of the poets of 'em all can produce better rhymes and raisins too within the gardens, I'll be content to have one of my own brushes ramm'd down my throat, and so spoil me for a finger as well as a poet hereafter.

Architect. Well said; Master Painter!

18 THE MAID OF THE OAKS.

Enter the several TRADESMEN.

S O N G.

By the IRISH PAINTER, to an Irish Tune.

*Then away to Champêtre, Champêtre come
all away,*

*To work at Champêtre is nothing at all but play;
As I know nothing of it, no more, my dear,
will I say,*

*But Champêtre for ever, for ever, and ay,
I say!*

*You may guess what a sight, for it never has
yet been seen,*

*Heav'n bless her sweet face! 'tis a sight for
the lovely Queen;*

*For Lords, and for Earls, and for Gentlefolks too,
And the busy Beau Monde, who have nothing
to do.*

Then away to Champêtre, &c.

*While 'tis light you'll see nothing, when darker,
O then you'll see,*

*That the darker it is, the more light it will
quickly be;*

*The moon and the stars, they may twinkle and
go to bed,*

*We can make better sun-shine, than such as
they ever made.*

Then away to Champêtre, &c.

Such

THE MAID OF THE OAKS. 19

*Such crowds and confusions, such uproar and
such delight,
With lamps hung by thousands, to turn the
day into night;
There will be Russians, Turks, Prussians, and
Dutchmen, so bright and gay,
And they'll all be so fine, they'll have nothing
at all to say.*

Then away to Champêtre, &c.

*Then let's take a drink to the 'Squire of the
Jolly Oaks,
May no crabbed critics come here with their
gibes or jokes;
If they did I could make the dear craters soon
change their notes,
With my little black brush I could sweep clean
their noisy throats!*

Then away to Champêtre, &c.

[Exeunt singing.]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

S C E N E THE OAKS.

MARIA *sitting under a great Tree.*

S I N G S.

COME *sing round my favourite tree,*
Ye songsters that visit the grove,
'Twas the haunt of my shepherd and me,
And the bark is a record of love.

Reclin'd on the turf by my side,
He tenderly pleaded his cause;
I only with blushes replied,
And the nightingale fill'd up the pause.

D A C A P O. Come sing, &c.

Enter OLDWORTH.

Oldw. Joy to my sweet Maria! may long
 succeeding years resemble this, her bridal
 hour! may health, and peace, and love still
 inspire her song, and make the harmony of
 her voice an emblem of her life! but come,
 my girl, if there is a wish remaining in your
 heart within my power to gratify, I hope,
 in this last hour of my cares, I shall not be
 a stranger to it.

Maria.

Maria. If I have a wish you have not indulged, Sir, I fear it must be an improper one, or it would not have escaped you.

Oldw. You seem disconcerted, Maria, be more explicit.

Maria. My mind is incapable of reserve with you; the most generous of men, is on the point of giving his hand to your—what shall I call myself? I am almost nameless, but as the creature of your bounty and cares, this title gives me a value in my own eyes; but I fear it is all I have to boast. The mystery you have kept, makes me apprehensive there is something in my origin ought to be concealed—what am I to interpret from your smiles?

Oldw. Every thing that is contrary to your surmises: be patient, sweet Maid of the Oaks; before night all mysteries shall be cleared. It is not an ordinary wedding I celebrate, I prepare a feast for the heart—Lady Bab Lardoon, as I live!—the princess of dissipation! catch an observation of her while you can, Maria; for though she has been but three days out of London, she is as uneasy as a mole in sun-shine, and would expire, if she did not soon dive into her old element again.

Enter Lady B A B.

Lady Bab. Dear Maria, I am happy to be the first of your company to congratulate

late you—well, Mr. Oldworth, I am delighted with the idea of your Fête; it is so novel, so French, so expressive of what every body understands, and nobody can explain; then there is something so spirited in an undertaking of expence, where a shower of rain would spoil it all.

—*Oldw.* I did not expect to escape from so fine a lady, but you and the world have free leave to comment upon all you see here.

Laugh where you must, be candid where you can.

I only hope that to celebrate a joyful event upon any plan, that neither hurts the morals, or politeness of the company, and at the same time sets thousands of the industrious to work, cannot be thought blame worthy.

Lady Bab. Oh, quite the contrary, and I am sure it will have a run; a force upon the seasons and the manners is the true test of a refined taste, and it holds good from a cucumber at Christmas, to an Italian opera.

Maria. Is the rule the same among the ladies, lady Bab; is it also a definition of their refinement to act in all things contrary to nature?

L. Bab. Not absolutely in all things, though more so than people are apt to imagine; for even in circumstances that seem most natural, fashion prompts ten times, where inclination prompts once; and there
would

would be an end of gallantry in this country, if it was not for the sake of reputation.

Oldw. What do you mean?

L. Bab. Why, that a woman without a connection, grows every day a more awkward personage; one might as well go into company without powder—if one does not *really* despise old vulgar prejudices, it is absolutely necessary to affect it, or one must sit at home alone.

Oldw. Indeed!

L. Bab. Yes, like lady Sprose, and talk morals to the parrot.

Maria. This is new, indeed; I always supposed that in places where freedom of manners was most countenanced, a woman of unimpeachable conduct carried a certain respect.

L. Bab. Only fit for sheep-walks and *Oakeries*!—I beg your pardon, Mr. Oldworth—in town it wou'd just raise you to the whist-party of old lady Cypher, Mrs. Squabble and lord Flimzey; and at every public place, you wou'd stand among the footmen to call your own chair, while all the maccaronies passed by, whistling a song through their tooth-picks, and giving a shrug—*dam it, 'tis pity that so fine a woman shou'd be lost to all common decency.*

Maria. [*smiling.*] I believe I had better stay in the *Oakery*, as you call it; for I am

afraid I shall never procure any *civility* in town, upon the terms required.

L. Bab. Oh, my dear, you have chose a horrid word to exprefs the intercourse of the bon ton; *civility* may be very proper in a mercer, when one is chusing a filk, but *familiarity* is the life of good company. I believe this is quite since your time Mr. Oldworth, but 'tis by far the greatest improvement the beau monde ever made.

Oldw. A certain ease was always an essential part of good breeding, but lady Bab must explain her meaning a little further, before we can decide upon the improvement.

L. Bab. I mean that participation of society, in which the French used to excel, and we have now so much outdone our models—I maintain, that among the *superior* set—mind, I only speak of them—our men and women are put more upon a footing together in London, than they ever were before in any age or country.

Oldw. And pray how has this happy resolution been effected?

L. Bab. By the most charming of all institutions, wherein we shew the world, that liberty is as well understood by our women as by our men; we have our *Bill of Rights* and our *Constitution* too, as well as they—we drop in at all hours, play at all parties, pay our own reckonings, and in every circumstance

cumstance, petticoats excepted, are true lively jolly fellows.

Maria. But does not this give occasion to a thousand malicious insinuations?

L. Bab. Ten thousand, my dear—but no *great measures* can be effected without a contempt of popular clamour.

Oldw. Paying of reckonings is I confess new since my time; and I should be afraid it might sometimes be a little heavy upon a lady's pocket.

L. Bab. A mere trifle—one generally wins them—Jack Saunter of the guards, lost a hundred and thirty to me upon score at one time; I have not eat him half out yet—he will keep me best part of next winter; but exclusive of that, the club is the greatest system of œconomy for married families, ever yet established.

Oldw. Indeed! but how so, pray?

L. Bab. Why, all the servants may be put to board wages, or sent into the country, except the footmen—no plunder of house-keepers, or maitres de hotel, no long butcher's bills—Lady Squander protests she has wanted no provision in her family these six months, except potatoes to feed the children, and a few frogs for the French governess—then our dinner-societies are so amusing, all the doves and hawks together, and one converses so freely; there's

no

no topick of White's or Almack's, in which we do not bear a part.

Maria. Upon my word I should be a little afraid, that some of those subjects might not always be managed with sufficient delicacy for a lady's ear, especially an unmarried one.

L. Bab. Bless me! why where's the difference? Miss must have had a strange education indeed, not to know as much as her Chapron: I hope you would not have the daughters black-ball'd, when the mothers are chose: Why it is almost the only place where some of them are likely to see each other.

Enter Sir HARRY GROVEBY.

Sir Harry. I come to claim my lovely bride—here at her favourite tree I claim her mine!—the hour is almost on the point, the whole country is beginning to assemble; every preparation of Mr. Oldworth's fancy is preparing,

*And while the priest accuse the Bride's delay,
Roses and myrtles shall obstruct her way.*

Maria. Repugnance would be affectation, my heart is all your own, and I scorn the look or action that does not avow it.

Oldw. Come, Sir Harry, leave your protestations, which my girl does not want; and see a fair stranger.

L. Bab.

L. Bab. Sir Harry, I rejoice at your happiness—and do not think me so tasteless, Maria, as not to acknowledge an attachment like yours, preferable to all others, when it can be had—*filer le parfait amour*, is the first happiness in life: But that you know is totally out of the question in town; the matrimonial comforts in *our* way, are absolutely reduced to two; to plague a man, and to bury him; the glory is to plague him first, and *bury him* afterwards.

Sir Harry. I heartily congratulate lady Bab, and all who are to partake of her conversation, upon her being able to bring so much vivacity into the country.

L. Bab. Nothing but the Fête Champêtre could have effected it, for I set out in miserable spirits—I had a horrid run before I left town—I suppose you saw my name in the papers.

Sir Harry. I did, and therefore concluded there was not a word of truth in the report.

Maria. Your name in the papers! Lady Bab, for what pray?

L. Bab. The old story—it is a mark of insignificance now to be left out: Have not they begun with you yet, Maria?

Maria. Not that I know of; and I am not at all ambitious of the honour.

L. Bab. Oh, but you will have it—the Fête Champêtre will be a delightful subject!—

jest!—To be complimented one day, laugh'd at the next, and abused the third; you can't imagine how amusing it is to read one's own name at breakfast in a morning paper.

Maria. Pray, how long may your ladyship have been accustomed to this pleasure?

L. Bab. Lord, a great while, and in all its stages: They first began with a modest inuendo, "*we hear a certain Lady, not a hundred miles from Hanoversquare, lost, at one sitting, some nights ago, two thousand guineas—* O tempora! O mores!"

Oldw. [laughing.] Pray, lady Bab, is this concluding ejaculation your own, or was it the Printer's?

L. Bab. His, you may be sure; a dab of Latin adds surprizing force to a paragraph, besides shewing the learning of the author.

Oldw. Well, but really I don't see such a great matter in this; why should you suppose any body applied this paragraph to you?

L. Bab. None but my intimates did, for it was applicable to half St. George's parish; but about a week after they honoured me with initials and italicks: "*It is said, Lady B. L's ill success still continues at the quinze table: it was observed, the same Lady appeared yesterday at court, in a ribband collier, having laid aside her diamond necklace, [diamond in italicks] as totally bourgeoise* and

and unnecessary for the dress of a woman of fashion.

Oldworth. To be sure this was advancing a little in familiarity.

Lady Bab. At last, to my infinite amusement, out I came at full length: "*Lady Bab. Lardoon has tumbled down three nights successively; a certain colonel has done the same, and we hear that both parties keep house with sprained ankles.*"

Oldworth. This last paragraph sounds a little enigmatical.

Maria. And do you really feel no resentment at all this?

Lady Bab. Resentment!—poor silly devils, if they did but know with what thorough contempt those of my circle treat a remonstrance—but hark, I hear the pastoral's beginning. [*Music behind*] Lord, I hope I shall find a shepherd!

Oldworth. The most elegant one in the world, Mr. Dupeley, Sir Harry's friend.

Lady Bab. You don't mean Charles Dupeley, who has been so long abroad?

Sir Harry. The very same; but I'm afraid he will never do, he is but half a maccaroni.

Lady Bab. And very possibly the worst half: It is a vulgar idea to think foreign accomplishments fit a man for the polite world.

Sir Harry. Lady Bab, I wish you would undertake him; he seems to have contracted
all

all the common-place affectation of travel, and thinks himself quite an over-match for the fair sex, of whom his opinion is as ill founded as it is degrading.

Lady Bab. O, is that his turn? what, he has been studying some late posthumous letters I suppose?—'twould be a delight to make a fool of such a fellow—where is he?

Sir Harry. He is only gone to dress; I appointed to meet him on the other side the Grove; he'll be here in twenty minutes.

Lady Bab. I'll attend him there in your place—I have it—I'll try my hand a little at *naiveté*—he never saw me—the dress I am going to put on for the Fête will do admirably to impose upon him: I'll make an example of his hypocrisy, and his *graces*, and his *usage du monde*.

Sir Harry. My life for it he will begin an acquaintance with you.

Lady Bab. If he don't, I'll begin with him: There are two characters, under which one may say any thing to a man; that of perfect assurance, and of perfect innocence: Maria may be the best critick of the last; but under the *appearance* of it, lord have mercy!—I have heard and seen such things!

Enter HURRY, [running.]

Hurry. Here they come! here they come! give them room! pray, Sir, stand a little back—a little further, your honourable ladyship,

ladyship, let the happy couple stand foremost—here they come!

Oldworth. And, pray, when you can find breath to be understood, who or what is coming, Hurry?

Hurry. All the cleverest lads and girls that could be picked out within ten miles round; they have garlands in one hand, and roses in another, and their pretty partners in another, and some are singing, and all so merry!

Oldworth. Stand still, Hurry; I foresaw you would be a sad master of the ceremonies; why they should not have appeared till the Lawn was full of company; they were to have danced there—you have let them in too soon by an hour.

Hurry. Lord, Sir! 'twas impossible to keep them out.

Oldworth. Impossible! why, I am sure they did not knock you down.

Hurry. No, but they did worse; for the pretty maids smiled, and smirked, and were so coaxing; and they called me dear Hurry, and sweet Hurry, and one call'd me pretty Hurry, and I did but just open the door a moment, flesh and blood could not resist it, and so they all rushed by.

Oldworth. Ay, and now we shall have the whole crowd of the country break in.

Hurry. No, Sir, no, never be afraid; we keep out all the old ones.

Sir

Sir Harry. Ay, here they come cross the lawn—I agree with Hurry, flesh and blood could not stop them—Joy and gratitude are overbearing arguments, and they must have their course.

Hurry. Now, Sir Harry! now, your ladyship! you shall see such dancing, and hear such singing!

Enter FIRST SHEPHERD, very gayly, followed by a group of SHEPHERDS and SHEPHERDESSES.

S O N G.

SHEPHERD.

Hither, ye swains, with dance and song,

Join your bands in sportive measure;

Hither, ye swains, with dance and song,

Merrily, merrily, trip it along:

*'Tis holiday, lads, from the cares of your tillage,
Life, health, and joy, to the Lord of the village.*

Scenes of delight,

Round you invite,

Harmony, beauty, love and pleasure:

Hither, ye swains, with dance and song.

Join your bands in sportive measure.

SHEPHER-

CHORUS.

Hither, ye swains, &c.

SHEPHERDESS.

*Hither, ye nymphs, and scatter around
Every sweet the spring discloses;*

*Hither, ye nymphs, and scatter them
round,*

*With the bloom of the hour enamel the
ground*

*The feast of the day is devoted to beauty,
Sorrow is treason, and pleasure a duty:*

Love shall preside,

Sovereign guide!

Fetter his wings with links of roses:

Hither, ye nymphs, and scatter around,

Every sweet the spring discloses.

CHORUS.

Hither, ye nymphs, &c.

BOTH.

Lasses and lads, with dance and song,

Join your bands in sportive measure:

Lasses and lads, with dance and song,

Merrily, merrily trip it along:

*An hour of youth is worth ages of reason,
'Tis the sunshine of life, take the gift of the
season,*

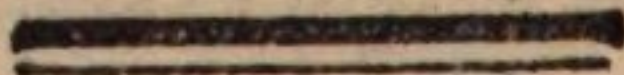
*Scenes of delight,
Round you invite,
Harmony, beauty, love and pleasure.*

CHORUS.

Lasses and lads, &c.

*Hurry. So much for singing, and now
for dancing; pray, give 'em room, Ladies
and Gentlemen.*

*Here a GRAND DANCE, of SHE-
PHERDS and SHEPHERDESSES,
which finishes the Second Act.*



A C T III.

S C E N E, THE GARDEN GATE.

[*Noise without.*]

INDEED, Sir, we can't! it is as much as our places are worth: Pray don't insist upon it.

Enter Old GROVEBY, booted and splash'd, pushing in HURRY.

Groveby. I must see Sir Harry Groveby, and I will see him. Do ye think, ye Jackanapes, that I come to rob the house?

Hurry. That is not the case, Sir; nobody visits my master to-day without tickets; all the world will be here, and how shall we find room for all the world, if people were to come how they please, and when they please?

Groveby. What, have you a stage play here, that one cannot be admitted without a ticket?

Hurry. As you don't know what we have here to-day, I must desire you to come to-morrow—Sir Harry won't see you to-day, he has a great deal of business upon his hands; and you can't be admitted without a ticket; and moreover you are in such a

pickle, and nobody will be admitted but in a fanciful drefs.

Groveby. This is a drefs after my own fancy, Sirrah; and whatever pickle I am in, I will put you in a worfe, if you don't immediately fhew me to Sir Harry Groveby—

[*Shaking his whip.*]

Hurry. Sir Harry's going to be married—What would the man have?

Groveby. I would have a fight of him *before* he goes to be married. I fhall marr his marriage, I believe. [*afide*] I am his uncle, puppy, and ought to be at the wedding.

Hurry. Are you fo, Sir? Blefs my heart! why would you not fay fo?—This way, good Sir! it was impoffible to know you, in fuch a figure; I could fooner have taken you for a smuggler than his uncle; no offence, Sir—If you will please to walk in that Grove there, I'll find him directly—I'm forry for what has happened—but you did not fay you were a gentleman, and it was impoffible to take you for one—no offence, I hope.

Groveby. None at all, if you do as I bid you.

Hurry. That I will, to be fure. I hope you are come to be merry, Sir. [*Exit.*]

Groveby. O, ay to be fure—It is true, I fee; I come at the very instant of his perdition—whether I fucceed or not, I fhall
do

do my duty, and let other folks be merry if they like it—Going to be married! and to whom? to a young girl, without birth, fortune, or without any body's knowing any thing about her; and without so much as saying to me, his uncle, *with your leave, or by your leave*: If he will prefer the indulgence of a boyish passion, to my affection and two thousand pounds per annum; let him be as merry as he pleases. I shall return to Gloomstock-hall, and make a new will directly. [Exit.

S C E N E *changes to a* GROVE.

Enter MARIA.

Maria. I wish I may have strength to support my happiness: I cannot get the better of my agitation; and though this day is to complete my wishes, my heart, I don't know how, feels something like distress—But what strange person is coming this way? How got he admitted in that strange dress?

Enter GROVEBY.

Groveby. Madam, your servant; I hope I don't intrude: I am waiting here for a young gentleman—If I disturb you, I'll walk at the other end.

Maria. Indeed, Sir, you don't disturb me. Shall I call any body to you, Sir?

C 3

Groveby.

Groveby. Not for the world, fair lady; an odd kind of a pert, bustling, restless fellow, is gone to do my business: and if I might be permitted to say a word or two, in the mean time, to so fair a creature, I should acknowledge it a most particular favour: But I intrude, I fear.

Maria. Indeed you don't, Sir—I should be happy to oblige you.

Groveby. And you make me happy by such civility—This is a most lovely creature! [aside.

Maria. Who can this be? [aside.

Groveby. I find, Madam, there is going to be a wedding here to-day.

Maria. Yes, Sir; a very splendid one, by the preparations.

Groveby. A very foolish business to make such a fuss about a matter which both parties may have reason to curse this time twelve month.

Maria. I hope not, Sir—Do you know the parties?

Groveby. One of them, too well, by being a near relation—Do you know the bride, young lady?

Maria. Pretty well, Sir: my near acquaintance with her makes me attend here to-day. [Maria seems confus'd.

Groveby. Might I, without being impertinent, beg to know something about her—
but

but you are partial to her, and won't speak your mind.

Maria. I am, indeed, partial to her—every body is too partial to her—her fortune is much above her deserts.

Groveby. Ay, ay, I thought so—sweet lady, your sincerity is as lovely as your person—you really think then, she does not deserve so good a match?

Maria. Deserve it, Sir! so far from deserving it, that I don't know that human creature than can deserve Sir Harry Groveby.

Groveby. What a sensible sweet creature this is! [*aside.*] Young lady, your understanding is very extraordinary for your age—you sincerely think then, that this is a very unequal match?

Maria. Indeed I do, very sincerely—

Groveby. And that it ought not to be.

Maria. Ought not to be, Sir! [*hesitating.*] That, Sir, is another question—If Sir Harry has promis'd—and the young lady's affections—

Groveby. Ay, to be sure, the young lady's affections! they are more to be consider'd than the young man's credit, or the old man's happiness—But pray, fair young lady, what are your real sentiments of this incognita?

Maria. Upon my word, Sir—[*hesitates.*] I scarce know how to answer your question—

[*much confus'd.*]

Groveby. Your delicacy to your friend won't let you speak out; but I understand your objections—Nay, I feel 'em so much, that I am come on purpose to break the match.

Maria. [*astonish'd.*] Indeed, Sir!

Groveby. Ay, indeed am I—a silly young puppy! without acquainting me with it, to go so far—I suppose some interested creature, with a little beauty and more cunning, has laid hold of this precious fool of a nephew of mine—

Maria. Your nephew, Sir!

Groveby. Yes, yes, my nephew; but he must give up his girl, or renounce the relationship.

Maria. But consider, Sir; what the poor young woman must suffer!

Groveby. She *ought* to suffer, a designing baggage! I'll be hang'd if it is not some demure looking chit, with a fair skin, and a couple of dimples in her cheeks, that has done all this mischief; you think so too, but you won't speak out.

Maria. But if Sir Harry is contented with such small accomplishments—

Groveby. He contented, a simpleton! don't say a word in his favour; have not you confessed, though her friend, that she does not deserve him? I'll take your word for it; you have good sense, and can see his folly: You can't give up your friend

to be sure; I see your affection struggling with your understanding; but you have convinced me that the fellow's undone.

Maria. For heaven's sake, Sir!—I convinc'd you!

Groveby. Had the young blockhead but half an eye he would have fallen in love with *you*; and if he had, there had been some excuse for his folly; on my word you are so sensible and sincere, I could fall in love with you myself—don't blush, maiden—I protest I never was half so much smitten in so short a time, when I was as young a fool as my Nephew—don't blush, damsel—

Maria. You overpower me with your goodness; but, Sir, pray, let me plead for him.

Groveby. Nay, nay, sweet young lady, don't contradict yourself; you spoke your sentiments at first—truth is a charming thing, and you're a charming creature, and you should never be asunder. My nephew, as you hinted at first, is a very silly fellow, and in short it is a damn'd match.

Enter Sir HARRY.

[*Who starts at seeing his Uncle, and looks ashamed.*]

Maria. I cannot stand this interview. [*Exit.*

Groveby. O, your humble servant, Sir Harry Groveby.

Sir

Sir Harry. My dear Uncle, I am so happy—

Groveby. O, to be sure—you are very happy to see me here. [*Sir Harry looks confused*] O, ho, you have some modesty left—And so you are going to be married, and forgot that you had an uncle living, did you?

Sir Harry. Indeed, Sir, I was afraid to trust your prudence with my seeming indiscretion; but were you to know the object of my choice—

Groveby. Ay, to be sure, I shall be bamboozled as you have been; but where is the old fox, that has made a chicken of you? I shall let him know a piece of my mind.

Sir Harry. Mr. Oldworth, Sir, is all probity, he knew nothing of my having an uncle, or he would never have given his consent, without your's.

Groveby. Ay, to be sure, they have set a simpleton-trap, and you have popp'd your head into it; but I have but a short word to say to you, give up the lady, or give up me.

Sir Harry. Let me intreat you to see her first.

Groveby. I have seen a young lady; and I am so put upon my mettle by your ingratitude. that if she would but talk me half an hour longer, I'd take her without a petti-

petticoat to Gloomstock-Hall, and have my Champêtre-wedding too.

Sir Harry. You are at liberty, Sir—

Groveby. To play the fool, as you have done—her own friend and companion told me she was undeserving!

Sir Harry. That Maria was undeserving! where is she who told you so? who is she?

Groveby. Your aunt, Sir, that may be; if I could get to talk to her again—so don't be in your airs—

Sir Harry. Should she dare to hint, or utter the least injurious syllable of my Maria, I would forget her sex, and treat her—

Groveby. And if you should dare to hint, or mutter the least injurious syllable of my passion, I should forget our relationship, and treat you—zounds, I don't know how I should treat you.

Sir Harry. But dear Sir, who is the slanderer? she has deceived you.

Groveby. I don't know her name, and you must not call her names.

Sir Harry. Where did you see her?

Groveby. Here, here.

Sir Harry. When, Sir?

Groveby. This moment, Sir.

Sir Harry. As I came in, Sir?

Groveby. Yes, Sir, yes—she could not bear the sight of you, and went away.

Sir Harry. Dear, Sir, that was Maria herself.

Groveby.

Grov. Maria! what Maria?

Sir Harry. Maria, the Maid of the Oaks, my bride that is to be.

Grov. That's a fib, Harry, it can't be, and it shan't be.

Sir Harry. It can be no other, and she is the only person upon earth, that could speak without rapture of herself.

Grov. And she is the person you are going to marry?

Sir Harry. I cannot deny it.

Grov. If you did, you ought to be hang'd—follow me, Sir, follow me, Sir—shew me to her this moment—don't look with that foolish face, but lead the way, and bring me to her, I say.

Sir Harry. What do you mean, Sir.

Grov. What's that to you, Sir—shew me the girl, I say; she has bamboozled you and mee too, and I will be reveng'd.

Sir Harry. But, dear Sir?

Grov. Don't dear me, I won't rest a moment 'till I have seen her; either follow me, or lead the way, for I must and will see her directly, and then you shall know, and she too, that I am—zounds! I'll shew you what I am—and so come along, you puppy you. [Exeunt.

SCENE

SCENE III. *A Flower-Garden.*

Enter Lady BAB, dressed as a Shepherdess, passing over the Stage, OLDWORTH following.

Oldworth. Hift, hift! Lady Bab. Here comes your prize; for the sake of mirth, and the revenge of your sex, don't miss the opportunity.

L. Bab. Not for the world! you see I am dress'd for the purpose. I have been out of my wits this half hour, for fear the scene should be lost, by the interruption of the company—what is that he?

Oldworth. Yes, he is looking out for us.

L. Bab. Step behind that stump of shrubs, and you shall see what an excellent actress I should have made, if fortune had not unluckily brought me into the world an Earl's daughter.

Oldworth. Don't be too hasty, for it is a pity. Sir Harry should not be a witness; he owes him vengeance too.

L. Bab. Away, away— [*Exit Oldworth.*
[*Lady BAB retires to a corner of the stage.*]

Enter

Enter DUPELEY.

Dupel. Where the devil is Sir Harry? this is certainly the place where I was appointed to find him; but I suppose I shall spring him and his bride from under a rose-bush by and by, like two pheasants in pairing-time—[*observing Lady Bab*] Hah! I wish that was a piece of game, she should not want a mate: is that a dress for the day, or is she one of the natives of this extraordinary region?—Oh! I see now, it is all pure Arcadian; her eyes have been used to nothing but daisy hunting; they are as awkward to her, when she looks at a man, as her elbows would be in a French Berline.

L. Bab. [*aside.*] My spark does not seem to want observation, he is only deficient in expression; but I will help him to that presently. Now to my character. [*settles herself.*]

Dupel. [*aside.*] What a neck she has? how beautifully nature works, when she is not spoil'd by a damn'd town stay-maker; what a pity she is so awkward; I hope she is not foolish.

[*During this observation, he keeps his eye fixed upon her neck; Lady Bab looks first at him, then at herself; unpins her nosegay, and with an air of the most perfect naiveté, presents it to him.*]

L. Bab.

L. Bab. You seem to wish for my nosegay, Sir, it is much at your service.

[Offers the flowers, and curtsseys awkward.]

Dupel. Oh, the charming innocent!—my wishes extend a little further. A thousand thanks, my fair one; I accept it as a faint image of your own sweets. To whom am I so much obliged?

L. Bab. To the garden-man, to be sure; he has made flowers grow all over the garden, and they smell so sweet; pray smell 'em, they are charming sweet I assure you, and have such fine colours—law! you are a fine nosegay yourself, I think.

[simplers, and looks at him.]

Dupel. Exquisite simplicity! *[half aside]* sweet contrast to fashionable affectation—Ah, I knew at first glance you were a compound of innocence and sensibility.

L. Bab. Lack-a-dazy heart! how could you hit upon my temper so exactly?

Dupel. By a certain instinct I have, for I have seen few, or none of the sort before; but, my dear girl, what is your name and situation?

L. Bab. Situation!

Dupel. Ay, what are you?

L. Bab. I am a bride maid.

Dupel. But, my sweet image of simplicity, when you are not a bride maid, what is your way of life? how do you pass your time?

L. Bab.

L. Bab. I rise with the lark, keep my hands always employ'd, dance upon a holiday, and eat brown bread with content.

[*With an innocent curtsy.*]

Dupel. O, the delicious description!—beechen shades, bleating flocks, Pan, pipes, and pastorals. [*aside.*] What an acquisition to my fame, as well as pleasure, to carry off this quintessence of Champêtre!—'tis but an annuity job—I'll do it.

[*During this soliloquy she examines him round and round.*]

L. Bab. And pray, what may you be? for I never saw any thing so out of the way in all my life!—he, he, he! [*Simpering.*]

Dupel. Be, my dear—I am a gentleman.

L. Bab. What a *fine* gentleman! bless me, what a thing it is!—this is a fine gentleman!—ha, ha, ha! I never saw any thing so comical in all my life—ha, ha, ha! and this is a fine gentleman, of which I have heard so much!

Dupel. What is the matter, my dear? is there any thing ridiculous about me, that makes you laugh? What have you heard of fine gentlemen, my sweet innocence?

L. Bab. That they are as gaudy as peacocks, as mischievous as jays, as chattering as magpies, as wild as hawks—

Dupel. And as loving as sparrows—my beautiful Delia, do not leave out the best property of the feathered creation.

L. Bab.

L. Bab. No, no, I did not mean to leave out that; I know you are very loving—of yourselves; ha, ha, ha! You are a sort of birds, that *flock*, but never *pair*.

Dupel. Why, you are satirical, my fairest; and have you heard any thing else of fine gentlemen?

L. Bab. Yes, a great deal more—That they take wives for fortunes, and mistresses for shew; squander their money among taylors, barbers, cooks, and fidlers; pawn their honour to sharpers, and their estates to Jews; and at last run to foreign countries to repair a pale face, a flimzy carcase, and an empty pocket—that's a fine gentleman for you!

Dupel. [*surprized.*] Hey-day! where has my Arcadian picked up this jumble?

L. Bab. I am afraid I have gone to far. [*aside.*]

Dupel. [*still surprized.*] Pray, my dear, what is really your name?

L. Bab. [*resuming her simplicity.*] My name is Philly.

Dupel. Philly!

L. Bab. Philly Nettle-top, of the vale.

Dupel. [*still suspicious.*] And pray, my sweet Philly, where did you learn this character of a fine gentleman?

L. Bab. O, I learnt it with my catechism—Mr. Oldworth has it taught to all the young maidens here about.

Dupel. [*aside.*] O, the glutton!—have I found at last the *clue*—I'll be hang'd if old fly-boots has not a rural seraglio, and this it the favourite sultana!

L. Bab. [*aside.*] I fancy I have put him upon a new scent—why, a real fool now would not have afforded half this diversion.

Dupel. [*significantly.*] So it is from Mr. Oldworth, is it, my charming *innocence*, that you have learnt to be so much afraid of fine gentlemen?

L. Bab. No, not at all afraid; I believe you are perfectly harmless if one treats you right, as I do our young mastiff at home.

Dupel. And how is that, pray?

L. Bab. Why, while one keeps at a distance, he frisks, and he flies, and he barks, and tears, and grumbles, and makes a sad rout about it—Lord you'd think he would devour one at a mouthful! but if one does but walk boldly up and look him in the face, and ask him what he wants, he drops his ears and runs away directly.

Dupel. Well said, rural simplicity again!—Oh damn it, I need not be so squeamish here!—Well but, my dear heavenly creature, don't commit such a sin, as to waste your youth, and your charms upon a set of rusticks here; fly with me to the true region of pleasure—my chaise and four shall be ready at the back gate of the park, and we will take the opportunity, when all the
servants

servants are drunk, as they certainly will be, and the company is gone tired to bed.

L. Bab. [*fondly.*] And would you really love me dearly now, Saturdays and Sundays and all.

Dupel. [*aside.*] Oh, this will do without an annuity, I see!

L. Bab. You'll forget all this prittle-prattle gibberish to me now, as soon as you see the fine strange ladies, by and by—there's Lady Bab Lardoon, I think they call her, from London.

Dupel. Lady Bab Lardoon, indeed!—Oh, you have named a special object for a passion—I should as soon be in love with the figure of the Great Mogul at the back of a pack of cards—If *she* has any thing to do with *hearts*, it must be when they are trumps, and she pulls them out of her pocket—No, sweet Philly; thank heaven that gave me insight into the sex, and reserv'd me for a woman in her native charms—here alone she is to be found, and paradise is on her lips! [*struggling to kiss her.*] Thus let me thank you for my nosegay.

During the struggle enter HURRY.

Hurry. Oh, Lady Bab, I come to call your ladyship [*pauses.*] Lord, I thought they never kiss'd at a wedding till after the cere-

mony; but they cannot begin too soon—I ask pardon for interruption. *[going.]*

[Dupeley stares, Lady Bab laughs.]

Dupel. Stay, Hurry; who was you looking for?

Hurry. Why, I came with a message for Lady Bab Larder, and would have carried her answer, but you stop'd her mouth.

Dupel. Who! what! who!—This is Philly Nettletop!

Hurry. Philly Fiddlestick—'Tis Lady Bab Larder, I tell you; do you think I don't know her, because she has got a new dress? But you are surpriz'd and busy, and I am in haste, so your servant. *[Exit.]*

Dupel. Surpriz'd indeed!—Lady Bab Lardoon!

L. Bab. No, no, Philly Nettletop!

[curtseys.]

Dupel. Here's a damn'd scrape! *[aside.]*

L. Bab. In every capacity, Sir—a *rural innocent*, *Mr. Oldworth's mistress*, or the *Great Mogul*, equally grateful for your favourable opinion.

[Slowly, and with a low curtsy.]

Enter OLDWORTH and Sir HARRY, laughing.

Mr. Oldworth, give me leave to present to you a gentleman remarkable for second sight; he knows all women by instinct.

Sir Harry.

Sir Harry. From a Princess to a figurante, from a vintage to a May-pole—I am rejoiced, I came in time for the catastrophe.

L. Bab. Mr. Oldworth, there is your travell'd man for you! and I think I have given a pretty good account of him.

[*Pointing at Dupeley, who is disconcerted.*]

Oldworth. I hope the ladies are not the only characters in which Mr. Dupeley has been mistaken!

L. Bab. Upon my word, Mr. Dupeley, considering you have not been two hours in the house, to have succeeded admirably, to recommend yourself to your company; why you look as if you had gone your *va toute* upon a false card.

Dupel. The devil's in her, I believe; she overbears me so, that I have not a word to say for myself.

L. Bab. Well, tho' I laugh now, I am sure I have most reason to be disconcerted, for that blundering fellow spoiled my fortune.

Sir Harry. How so?

L. Bab. Why, I should have had an annuity.

Oldworth. Come, come, my good folks, you have both acquitted yourselves admirably: Mr. Dupeley must forgive the innocent deceit; and you, Lady Bab, like a generous conqueror, should bear the triumph moderately.

D 3

Dupel.

Dupel. I own myself her captive, bound in her chains, and thus I lay all my former laurels at her feet. [*Kneels.*

L. Bab. The laurels have been mostly poetical—gathered in imagination only; he, he, he!

Dupel. Quarter, quarter, my dear invincible!

Sir Harry. Now this scene is finished, let me open another to you—Maria's charms have been as much signalized as her ladyship's wit—my old uncle Groveby—

L. Bab. Of Gloomstock-hall.

Sir Harry. The same, and full primed with the rhetorick of sixty-five, against a marriage of inclination; but such a conversion! such a revolution!

Oldworth. Your uncle here! I must chide you, Sir Harry, for concealing from me, that you had a relation, so well intitled to be consulted—which way is he?

Sir Harry. I left him all in transport with my bride; he kisses her, and squeezes her hand—'gad, I shan't get her away from him, without your help.

Dupel. Poor Sir Harry!

L. Bab. If she has sweetened that old Crab, that his sourness will not set our teeth an edge, she has work'd miracles indeed.

Sir Harry. There you totally mistake his character, Lady Bab:—no—he has the heart

heart of an Oldworth. [*addressing himself to Mr. Oldworth*] Though I confess with very different manners; his expression often puts me in mind of the harsh preparation of instruments; your ear is jarred, before it is delighted—but attend to his sentiments, and as Hamlet says,

He will discourse most excellent Musick.

He never said or did an ill-natured thing in his life.

L. Bab. I wish I had him in town, to contrast with some *smooth* successful characters of my acquaintance, who will smile upon you, even though you affront them, and always flatter your judgement, when they mean to pick your pocket—but here he is, I declare, and looks if he was quite in tune.

Enter GROVEBY with MARIA under his arm.

Sir Harry. [*running to her.*] I was coming to seek you, my Maria.

Grov. Your Maria! Sir, my Maria—*she* will own me, if you won't—there, Sir, let her teach you your duty.

[*Quitting Maria, who retires with Sir Harry to the bottom of the stage.*]

Oldworth. Sir, I have many pardons to ask of you; but Sir Harry will be my witness, that my fault was in my ignorance; had I

known your name and situation, I should have paid you my respects months ago.

Grov. Sir, I don't wonder the graceless rogue forgot me, but I shall be even with him; he shan't have a guinea from me.

Oldworth. Good Sir, you are not serious that he has offended you—

Grov. I am serious, that I have found another inheritor for Gloomstock-Hall—I have got a niece, worth twenty such nephews, [*Maria and Sir Harry approaching*] Ay, you may look, Sir, but *she* shall have every acre of it. [*taking Maria by the hand.*]

Sir Harry. I ever found your kindness paternal, and you now give me the best proof of it.

Grov. No, Sir, had I been your father, and you had surprised me with a match like this, I should have taken another method.

Sir Harry. What would that have been, my dear Uncle?

Grov. I would have loaded you with all the rents, and you should have been forced to keep me, at your own expence, for the rest of my life, Sirrah.

L. Bab. There is a sort of humour about this old fellow, that is not unpleasant; I must have a little laugh with him before the day is over.

Grov. Well, Mr. Oldworth, I intend there shall be no more ceremony between
us;

us; I shall not quit your Champêtre, I assure you—but what shall I do, to equip myself; one shall look like a fool, it seems, dressed in one's own cloaths.

Oldworth. Sir, your good humour and compliance will be a new compliment to the day—you shall be supplied—I took care to be provided with plenty of habits for chance comers.

Grov. Why, then, this lady, who looks like a merry one, shall choose for me, if she will do me that favour?

L. Bab. With great pleasure, Sir; and before I have done with you, I'll make you look—

Grov. Ay, what shall I look, fair lady?

L. Bab. Why, like Old Burliegh, revived from the Champêtre, Leicester gave to Queen Elizabeth, at Kennelworth-Castle.

Grov. And no bad compliment, neither—Gad, fair lady, if you could revive more of 'em, it would do the country no harm, I believe.

Oldworth. Well, my good friends—now for a slight refreshment, and then for the happy rites. Who must lead the bride?

Grov. That will I—she is my niece, and only your ward. Give me your hand, Lady Paramount, of Gloomstock-Hall.

[*Leads Maria off.*]

Dupel.

Dupel. And may I be thought worthy to offer mine to the lovely Phillida?

L. Bab. She accepts of your sagacity as Cavalier Servante and Cecisbo [*going off*] and as we go along, we will talk of the annuity.

Dupel. [*half aside*] Gad, you deserve one—and, if I durst, I'd make it a jointure—and now, if you please, you may over hear that, my Lady Quickears.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. A GROVE.

Enter HURRY in great spirits.

Hurry. **H**ERE, lass, take this basket, and run away to the church, or you'll be thrown out, and then you won't be married this year—tell all the girls to be sure they strew in time to the music; and bid Dolly Dump smile, and not look as if she was at a funeral. [*Exit Girl.*] What a day of joy is this! I could leap out of my skin, and into it again—here, you, Robin—

Enter ROBIN.

Robin. What say you, Master Hurry?

Hurry. What signifies what I say, when you are running and flustering about, that you can neither hear, see, nor understand!

Robin. Law, Master, I try to do every thing after you—where shall I go next?

Hurry. Run away to the ringers, and set the bells a-going directly—and do you hear [*Robin returns*] Huzza all of you, till no body can hear the bells. [*Exit Robin.*] What have I to do now?—ho, I must go down

down to the Tents. [*Going.*] No, I'll go first to the Shrubbery, and tell the musicians— [*Going, and returns.*] That I have done already—I must take care that none of the servants—that will do by-and-by. I must bid the maids—'gad I must not go near *them* neither in these rampant spirits—I am so full of every thing, that I can think for nothing but to be mad with joy! [*Exit singing and capering.*]

S C E N E II.

ARCADES OF FLOWERS.

Procession from the Marriage, Bells ringing, Music playing, and Huzzas at a distance.

S O N G.

FEMALE VOICE.

*B*reezes that attend the spring,
 Bear the sound on rosy wing,
 Waft the swelling notes away,
 'Tis Maria's wedding day.

CHORUS OF FEMALE VOICES.

Spread the tidings o'er the plain,
 Call around each maid and swain,
 Dress'd in garlands fresh and gay,
 'Tis Maria's bridal day.

MALE

MALE VOICE.

*Hence suspicion, envy, strife,
 Ev'ry ill that poisons life,
 Skulking vice, and specious art,
 All that spoils, or cheats the heart.*

CHORUS OF MALE VOICES.

*Here the chastened Loves invite.
 Harmless dalliance, pure delight,
 Choral sonnet, festive play,
 'Tis Maria's bridal day.*

MALE VOICE.

*P L E N T Y come with ceaseless board,
 M I R T H to crown the evening board,
 T R U T H the nuptial bed to guard,
 J O Y and P E A C E, its bright reward.*

FEMALE VOICES.

*But the chief invited guest,
 H E A L T H in rosy mantle drest,
 Come, and with the lengthened stay,
 Make her life a bridal day.*

CHORUS.

*Spread the tidings o'er the plain,
 Call around each maid and swain,
 Dress'd in garlands fresh and gay,
 'Tis Maria's bridal day.*

Oldworth.

Oldworth. Thank you, my honest friends and neighbours; if *your* hearts o'erflow with joy, how must it be with *mine*? I beg you to retire a moment. [*they retire.*

[*He walks about greatly agitated.*]

O, my heart! my heart! what a moment is this? I cannot bear it! the tide's too strong, and will o'erwhelm me.

Maria. What is the cause of this?

Oldworth. You are, Maria—you!

Maria. Am I, Sir?—heav'n forbid!

Oldworth. Heaven has granted it, and I avow it—I have liv'd to see in these times, successful merit, and disinterested love—my hopes and wishes are accomplish'd! my long projected joys are full, and I will proclaim 'em! I have a child!

Maria. Sir!

Oldworth. Come to my arms, Maria! thy father's arms! If my lips fail me, let my heart, in throbs, speak the discovery.

Maria. O, Sir! explain this mystery!

Oldworth. I have a father's right! my child's conduct has made it a proud one.

Maria. How, how, Sir!—I am lost in rapture and amazement!

Grov. So we are all.

Oldworth. Excuse me, brother, Madam, all—my story is very short, Maria; the hour of your birth made *me* a widower, and *you* a splendid heiress; I trembled at the dangers of that situation, made more dangerous

dangerous by the loss of your mother—to be the object of flattery, in the very cradle, and made a prey to interest is the common lot attending it—These reflections, call them whim, call them singularities, what you please, induced me to conceal your birth; being abroad at the time, the plan was easily executed.

Maria. How blind have I been? Benevolent as you are to all, I might still have perceived and interpreted the distinction of your unremitting tenderness—how could I mistake the parent's partiality, the parent's fondness?

Oldworth. Your happiness has been the motive of my actions, be it my excuse—The design has answered wonderfully—for though Maria's virtues would have found their lustre under any trial, there would have wanted the humble station of the Maid of the Oaks to give her due proof of a disinterested lover.

Maria. O, Sir! expect not *words*—where shall I find even *sentiments* of tenderness, gratitude, and duty, that were not yours before.

Oldworth. The life of my ward, is a pledge for that of the daughter and the wife—To you, Sir Harry, I shall make no apology for my secrecy; it has served to give scope and exercise to your generosity, a sensation more gratifying to minds, like your's, than
any

any acquisition of fortune—that pleasure past, accept now, with Maria's hand, the inheritance of Oldworth's Oaks.

Sir Harry. Sir, your conduct does not surprise, but it overwhelms me—long may you remain the possessor of Oldworth's Oaks! when you cease to be so, he will ill deserve to succeed you, who does not make your example the chief object of his imitation.

Dupel. New joy to the disinterested lover, and to the destined Queen of the Oaks!

L. Bab. To the amiable pair, and the rewarder of their merits—Mr. Oldworth, you promised us a singular regale, but you have outdone yourself.

Grov. Regale! egad I don't know what to call it—he has almost turned the Champêtre into a tragedy, I think—I never felt my eyes twinkle so oddly before, but I shall be merry by and by; and when I begin, have at you double bottles and long corks!

Oldworth. My worthy friend, brother let me call you! I have robbed you of a pleasure; I know you also had your eye upon my Maid of the Oaks, for an exercise of your generosity.

Grov. It is very true, I should have been as well pleased as her lover to receive her only with an under petticoat, though not quite for the same reason—but you may perceive

perceive how cursedly vexed I am at the disappointment. [*pauses.*] Ay, I must alter the disposition of my acres once more—I will have no Nabobs nor Nabobbeſſes in my family.

L. Bab. The females would be the better of the two, for all that; they would not be guilty of ſo much rapacity to acquire a fortune, and they would ſpend it to better purpoſes.

Dupel. By as much as a province is better diſpoſed of in a jewel at the breaſt of a Cleopatra, than when it is melted down in the fat guts of mayors and burgeſſes of country corporations.

Grov. I agree in your preference between the two; but an honeſt country gentleman, and a plain Engliſh wife, is more reſpectable and uſeful than both—ſo do you hear, Madam, take care to provide me a ſecond ſon, fit for that ſort of family—let him be an honeſt fellow, and a jolly fellow, and in every reſpect a proper repreſentative for Gloomſtock-hall.

Enter HURRY.

Hurry. An't pleaſe your honour and worſhip, here are all the quality perſons in fanciful dreſſes—you never ſaw ſuch a ſight, they are for all the world like the Turks and Pruſſians—do but look at 'em, how they come prancing along through

the grove; I never saw any thing so fine, and so proud, and so fantastical—Lord, I wonder any body will ever wear a coat and waistcoat again—This is *shampeter* indeed!

Grov. My friend Hurry is in the right—Harry, come and help to dress me, for 'till I have got my fool's coat on, I can't make one among 'em.

Sir Harry. I'll wait upon you—My sweet Maria, I must leave you for a few minutes—for an age.

Oldworth. My heart is now disburthen'd, and free to entertain my friends—Come, Maria, let us meet 'em, and shew in our faces the joy of our hearts—Will your ladyship and Mr. Dupeley assist us?

[*Exit Oldworth and Sir Harry.*]

L. Bab. O, most willingly, Mr. Oldworth!

[*As she is going out, she sees Actæa coming.*]

“Angels and ministers of grace defend us!”

Dupel. Hey-day! what is coming, Lady Bab?

L. Bab. O, that most hideous of all goblins, a country cousin—and I can neither avoid her, nor overlook her, as I should do in town.

Dupel. Where is the barbarian?

L. Bab. Mistake her if you can—the lovely Diana there, that is talking to Maria, with a tin crescent upon her head, big enough for a Turkish mosque.

Dupel.

THE MAID OF THE OAKS. 67

Dupel. [looking through his glass.] Oh, I have her—

[By her step, the goddess is revealed.

L. Bab. What can I do with her? she'll suffocate me if you don't take her off my hands.

Enter ACTÆA, followed by six hunters.

Actæa. O cousin! Lady Bab! here am I at the head of my hunters—I left the company to come to you—I want to practise my song before I sing it in publick, you shall hear me. Ha! ha! ha!

L. Bab. O you delicate creature! pray let us hear it—while she is singing we'll steal off and join the company. [*aside to Dupeley.*] Come, my dear, pray begin.

ACTÆA sings her HUNTING SONG.

[During which Lady Bab and Dupeley steal
off laughing.]

Come, rouse from your trances!

The sly morn advances,

To catch sluggish mortals in bed;

Let the horn's jocund note

In the wind sweetly float,

While the fox from the brake lifts his head;

Now creeping,

Now peeping,

The fox from the brake lifts his head:

Each away to his steed,

Your Goddess shall lead,

Come follow, my worshippers, follow;

For the chace all prepare,

See the hounds snuff the air,

Hark, hark, to the huntsman's sweet hollow!

Hark

*Hark Fowler, bark Rover,
 See Reynard breaks cover,
 The hunters fly over the ground;
 Now they skim o'er the plain,
 Now they dart down the lane,
 And the hills, woods, and vallies resound;
 With dashing,
 And splashing,
 The hills, woods, and vallies resound:
 Then away with full speed,
 Your Goddess shall lead,
 Come follow, my worshippers, follow;
 O'er hedge, ditch, and gate,
 If you stop you're too late,*

Hark, bark, to the huntsman's sweet hollow!

[After the Song, the * Scene opens, and discovers the GARDENS illuminated.]

ACTÆA and her FOLLOWERS join the Company.

Another set of Company dance a Country-Dance.

Enter OLDWORTH.

Oldworth. This is as it should be—a dance, or a song, or a shout of joy, meets me at every turn; but come, ladies, I shall trust you no more in the gardens; at least not my fair dancers; though the evening is fine it may be deceitful, we have prepared a place under cover for the rest of the entertainment.

Enter HURRY.

Hurry. Gentlemen, nobility, ladies and gentry, you are all wanted in the Temple of Venice, to—but I'll not say what, that you may be more surpriz'd; and if you are surpriz'd here, you'll be more surprized there; and we shan't have done with you there neither—pray make haste or you'll get no places.

[They all croud off.]

HURRY,

* The painting of this Scene is taken from a Portico, in the Gardens of Lord Stanly, as illuminated at his entertainment last summer.

HURRY, *alone.*

Hurry. Bless my heart, how the whole place goes round with me!—my head seems quite illuminationed as well as that there. [*Points to the building.*] See what it is to have more business than one's brains can bear; I am as giddy as a goose; yet I have not touched a drop of liquor to day—but three glasses of punch, a pint of hot negus to warm me, a bottle of cyder to cool me again, and a dram of cherry-bounce to keep all quiet—I should like to lie down a little—but then what would become of the *Sham-Peter*—no, as I am entrusted with a high office, I scorn to flinch; I will keep my eyes open, and my head clear—ay, and my hands too—and I wish all my countrymen had done the same at this general election. [*Reels off.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

E 4 ACT

A C T V.

S C E N E, THE SALOON.*

A M I N U E T.

*After the Minuet, enter a SHEPHER-
DESS, drawing forward a SHE-
PHERD by the arm.*

D U E T T O.

S H E.

*SIMON, why so lost in wonder,
At these folks of high degree?
If they're finer, we are fonder;
Love is wealth to you and me.*

H E.

*Phœbe stop, and learn more duty,
We're too lowly here to please:
Oh, how splendor brightens beauty!
Who'd not wish to be like these?*

S H E.

* This Scene is also a representation of the temporary saloon, as designed by Mr. Adam, and erected at Lord Stanley's.

S H E.

*Prithee, Simon, cease this gazing,
They're deceitful, as they're fair;*

H E.

*But their looks are all so pleasing,
Phæbe, how can I forbear?*

S H E.

Simon, stop, and learn more duty;

H E.

Honest freedom can't displease;

B O T H.

H E. *Riches give new charms to beauty.*

S H E. *Riches give no charms to beauty.*

H E. *Who'd not wish to be like these?*

S H E. *Who wou'd wish to be like these?*

*SONG.

* S O N G.

*O Simon, simple Simon, know,
 The finest garments cover woe;
 The outside glitter never tells
 The grief of heart, that inward dwells.*

*We rustic folk so true and plain,
 Shall ne'er allure the light and vain;
 Whate'er without our fortune wears,
 Within no pang our bosom tears.*

*O Simon, simple Simon, know,
 That lack of wealth, is lack of woe;
 Then homeward go, and let us prove
 The greatest bliss, content with love.*

The

* This song is omitted in the representation.

*The Character of FOLLY enters from the
Top of the Stage to lively Symphony.*

S O N G.

*Make room, my good neighbours, of every degree,
My name it is FOLLY, who does not know me?
Of high ones, and low ones, of great and of small,
I've been the companion, and friend of you all:
Wherever I come, I drive away care,
And if there's a crowd, I'm sure to be there.*

I'm here, and there,

And every where,

All know me—all know me—

Where'er I come,

Nobody's dumb;

Prating, prancing,

Singing, dancing;

Running o'er with mirth and glee.

*From country elections, I gallop post haste,
For there, I am always the most busy guest;
And whether it be in the country or town,
I'm hugg'd very close, by the cit and the clown:
The courtier, the patriot, the turn-coat and all,
If I do not sweeten—breed nothing but gall.*

I'm here, and there, &c. &c.

The

*The statesman, without me, unhappy wou'd be;
 No lady, so chaste, but gallants it with me;
 The gravest of faces, who physick the land,
 For all their grimaces, shake me by the hand;
 At the play-house, a friend to the author, I sit,
 And clap in the gallery, the boxes and pit.
 I'm here, and there, &c. &c.*

[A slow symphony—all the company retire to the wings on each side; the curtains of the saloon are drawn up, and discovers the company at supper.]

Enter DRUID.

Druid.

FOLLY, away! nor taint this nuptial feast!
 I come, a friendly, self-invited guest;
 The Druid of these Oaks, long doom'd
 to dwell

Invisible, 'till beauty broke the spell;
 Beauty, which here erects her throne,
 And every spell dissolves, except her own.

[Intended to be sung.]

Beauty breaks the magic spell,
 Her pow'r can ev'ry power subdue;
 Can charm the Druid from his cell,
 To revel and rejoice with you!
 What cannot beauty, spotless beauty do?

Stand

Stand all apart, while mortals learn
The recompence their virtues earn;
When thus the gen'rous court *their* power,
Celestial guardians find the dower,
And these are mansions they prepare,
For the disint'rested and fair.

[*He waves his wand.*]

The Scene breaks away, and discovers the
PALACE OF CELESTIAL LOVE.

MARIA, take this oaken crown,
The region round is all your own:
See ev'ry Dryad of the groves,
With bending head, salute your loves;
And Naiads, deck'd in constant green,
With homage due, avow their queen;
Here all of autumn, all of spring,
The flower and fruit to you they bring;
And, while they heap the lavish store,
A father's blessing makes it more.

Maria. It does, indeed! my heart o'erflows with happiness.

Oldworth. Long, long, may it do so!
my dear, my matchless daughter!—Come
then, my friends and children; I see our
joys are too sincere and spirited to be any
longer celebrated in magic and allegory.

Groveby.

Groveby. I ask your pardon, friend Oldworth; this reverend old gentleman Druid has charmed me, and I hope we shall have more of his company—A contempt for old times may be fashionable, but I am pleas'd with every thing that brings them to my remembrance—I love an old oak at my heart, and can sit under its shade 'till I dream of Cressy and Agincourt; it is the emblem of British fortitude, and like the heroic spirits of the island, while it o'ertops, it protects the undergrowth—And now, old son of Mistletoe, set that sentiment to music.

Oldworth. And he shall, brother.

[Druid gives signs to the musicians.]

S O N G.

TWO VOICES.

Grace and strength of Britain's isle,

Mayst thou long thy glories keep,

Make her hills with verdure smile,

Bear her triumphs o'er the deep.

CHORUS. Grace and strength, &c.

Dupel. Well, Lady Bab, are your spirits quite exhausted, or have the events of the day made you pensive? I begin to believe there are more rational systems of happiness than ours—shou'd my fair instructress become a convert, my ambition wou'd be still to follow her.

L. Bab.

L. Bab. I am no convert—my mind has ever been on the side of reason, though the torrent in which I have lived has not allowed me time to practice, or even to contemplate it as I ought—but to follow fashion, where we feel shame, is surely the strongest of all hypocrisy, and from this moment I renounce it.

Groveby. And you never made a better renounce in your life.

L. Bab. Lady Groveby, accept the friendship of one sincerely desirous to imitate your virtues—Mr. Oldworth, you do not know me yet; you forbid your company masks upon their faces, I have worn one upon my character, to you, and to the world.

Oldworth. Lady Bab wanted but the resolution to appear in her genuine charms, to make her a model to her rank, and to the age.

Dupel. To those charms I owe my conversion—and my heart, hitherto a prodigal, justly fixes with her, from whom it received the first impression of love and reason—There wants but the hand of Lady Bab, to make Oldworth's Oaks distinguished by another union, founded on merit in her sex, and discernment in mine.

L. Bab. Sir, your proposal does me honour; but it is time enough to talk of hearts and hands—Let us follow the example before

fore us in every thing—after the life we have led, six months probation may be very proper for us both.

Oldworth. Amiable Lady Bab!—Confer the gift when you please;—but my Fête Champêtre shall be remember'd as the date of the promise—and now for such a song and dance as will best conclude so happy a day.

[*Short flourish of Instruments.*]

V A U D E V I L L E.

S H E P H E R D.

*Ye fine fangled folks, who from cities and courts,
By your presence enliven the fields,
Accept for your welcome our innocent sports,
And the fruits that our industry yields.*

CHORUS. *Ye fine fangled folks, &c.
No temple we raise to the idol of wealth,
No altar to interest smokes,
To the blessing of love, kind seasons and health,
Is devoted the Feast of the Oaks.*

CHORUS. *No temple we raise, &c.*

S H E P H E R D.

SHEPHERDESS.

*From the thicket and plain, each favourite haunt,
The villagers hasten away,
Your encouraging smile is the bounty they want,
To compensate the toils of the day;*

CHORUS. From the thicket, &c.

*The milk-maid abandons her pail and her cow,
In the furrow the plowman unyokes,
From the valley and meadow all press to the brow,
To assist at the Feast of the Oaks.*

CHORUS. The milk maid, &c.

SHEPHERD.

*The precept we teach is contentment and truth
That our girls may not learn to beguile,
By reason to govern the pleasures of youth,
And decorate age with a smile;*

CHORUS. The precept we teach, &c.

*No serpent approaches with venemous tooth,
No raven with ominous croaks,
Nor rancorous critick, more fatal than both,
Shall poison the Feast of the Oaks.*

CHORUS. No serpent approaches, &c.

SHEPHERDESS.

*Bring roses, and myrtles, new circlets to weave,
 Ply the flutes in new measures to move,
 And lengthen the song to the star of the eve,
 The favouring planet of love.*

CHORUS. Bring roses, and myrtles, &c.

*Oh Venus! propitious attend to the lay,
 Each shepherd the blessing invokes;
 May he who is true, like the youth of to-day,
 Find a prize like the Maid of the Oaks.*

CHORUS. Oh Venus! propitious, &c.

DRUID, *stopping the Musicians.*

Yet hold—though Druid now no more,
 He's wrong who thinks my spells are o'er,
 Thus midst you all I throw them round,
 Oh, may they fall on genial ground!
 May ev'ry breast their influence prove!
 The magic lies in *truth of Love*.
 'Tis that irradiates ev'ry scene,
 Restores from clouds the blue serene,
 And makes, without a regal dome,
 A palace of each humble home.

[*Exeunt.*]

The whole finishes with a Grand Dance.

F I N I S.

THE
MAN OF BUSINESS,
A COMEDY,
BY GEORGE COLMAN.

Dramatis Personae.

MEN.

FABLE.	Sir HELTER SKEL- TER.
GOLDING.	Colonel RAKISH.
BEVERLEY.	SCANTY.
DENIER.	CAPIAS.
TROPICK.	SNAP.
CHECK.	HAZARD.
HANDY.	CASH.
Lord RIOT.	SERVANT.

WOMEN.

Mrs. GOLDING.	Mrs. CARLTON.
LYDIA.	Mrs. FLOUNCE.

THE
MAN OF BUSINESS.

A C T I.

AN APARTMENT IN GOLDING'S
HOUSE.

Enter FABLE and Mrs. GOLDING.

[She in a fancy-dress, with a mask in her hand.]

Fable. MADAM, Madam, I tell you, he is a coxcomb—an arrant coxcomb, Mrs. Golding.

Mrs. Golding. He is a gentleman—thoroughly the gentleman, Mr. Fable.

Fab. Yes, a modern gentleman—a fine gentleman—a race of puppies more pernicious to this country than a breed of wolves would have been.—A mongrel puppy too; on a wrong scent after pleasure; in chace of the fashion, but for ever at fault; with vanity in view, and ridicule for a whipper-in.

Mrs. Gold. Well, well, Mr. Fable, it does not signify talking. You know, you and I could never agree on this matter. I

was always for my kinsman's keeping the very best company; and, for my part, I see no great difference between him and his friends of quality—Nay, indeed, mongrel, as you are pleased to call him, Sir, the advantage is rather on his side: he has money without rank, and many of them have rank without money. If Beverley has great goings-out, he has great comings-in too; while they keep fine houses, flaming equipages, and great tables out of nothing at all.

Fab. For which very reason, Mrs. Golding, he is not upon even terms with them. What has a man of business to do with men of pleasure? Why is a young banker to live with young noblemen?

Mrs. Gold. And why not, Mr. Fable? Is not the business of the house carried on at the polite end of the town? Does not he live in the very centre of persons of fashion? And has not he constant dealings with them?—Not shut up in Lombard-street—within the sound of Bow-bell, or in sight of the Monument—not cramming turtle and venison at the King's-Arms, or the London-Tavern—but ballotted into the Macaroni, and a member of the Scavoir Vivre.

Fab. So much the worse—so much the worse, Mrs. Golding—his father, who was the firm of the house, established the credit of it by decency and sobriety: but dying
while

while Beverley was very young, your husband, Mr. Golding, was received into the partnership as a man of experience, capable of carrying on the business to more advantage. He, you know, is now absent on necessary business abroad. In the mean time, I am left a kind of guardian to Beverley, and have the superintendence of his affairs—and what account shall I be likely to give of them, when instead of making money after the example of his father, he is intent on nothing but spending it? Horses at Newmarket, hounds at Bagshot, a villa, a mistress, play, and a round of dissipation among hairbrain'd spendthrifts, wasting their constitutions before they arrive at maturity, spending their fortunes before they come to them, granting annuities to eat up their estates, or living upon the sale of post-obits and reversions!—There, Madam, there's a picture of a genteel young banker at the west-end of the town for you; drawn from the life, and coloured after nature; how do you like it, Madam?

Mrs. Gold. A frightful caricature, Mr. Fable! your descriptions are just the reverse of that sweet flower of a man, the auctioneer over the way. His style is enchanting and delicate, elegant as the *or moulu*, or Derbyshire petrifications, he sets to sale, and soft as the pencil of Guido, Raphael, or Correggio—your pictures may be taken

from nature; but they are dark!—dark as the landscapes of Poussin, and wild, and horrible as the views of Salvator Rosa.

Fab. Madam, Madam, it is these affected airs, Madam, that pervert your understanding, and make you blind to the danger of your kinsman.—He is in imminent danger of ruin, Madam, which will fall upon him, if something is not speedily done to prevent it.

Mrs. Gold. And what would you have me do, Mr. Fable? All I say is, that good company is a very good thing, and genteel connexions can never do my kinsman any mischief; and if I had been mistress, I never would have rested till I had got him into parliament.

Fab. Into parliament!—into jail, Madam. Is not he at expence enough—

Mrs. Gold. Expence! Lord, lord! This is a point of œconomy, Sir. Why he would save above double the charge of bringing him into the house by the mere postage of letters.—Sir Geoffry Kilderkin got himself elected for no other purpose.—My kinsman too would frank himself whole again.—And then I am sure he would make an admirable figure in a debate.—Oh, how it would have delighted me to have sat among the ladies in the gallery of the house—to have seen him upon his feet, his whole person hanging over his right leg, his right
arm

arm swinging to and fro like a pendulum, and his tongue running down like a larum!

Fab. So, so! you, I fear, are too far gone for wholesome counsel. Beverley, I hope is not quite incorrigible, and some good may be done upon him. Good morrow to you, Madam! I have business; good day, Madam.

Mrs. Gold. Good night, if you please, Sir. You may be just up, but I have not been to bed yet, being, as you see, but just come from the Pantheon. The masquerade began to grow thin; but my kinsman, who was there, is not come home yet, and may not return for some time perhaps—so, once more, good night, good Mr. Fable! I'll endeavour to recruit my spirits from the fatigue of the pleasures of the night, and leave you to the business of the day. Your servant, Sir. [Exit.

FABLE alone.

Your servant, Madam!—A weak woman, incapable indeed of swaying the mind of Beverley by her advice, but still serving to countenance his follies by her example.—But now to the business of the day, as she says!—A serious day it will appear to the young gentleman, I fancy—But it is high time to make him serious—I'll just allow him a short interval to sleep off his masquerade, and then wake him from his dream

dream of folly to a sense of his true situation.

Enter CHECK.

Fab. Good morrow, Check!

Check. Good morrow to your honour!—The shop is just opened and sprinkled. I am going to the compting-house.

Fab. That's right, Check. Regularity and punctuality are the life of business.

Check. The life and soul, Sir. I have always found them so—always exact myself I can answer—always precise to a second—and as true to my time as the men that strike the quarters at St. Dunstan's. Ha! ha!

Fab. You're merry, Check!

Check. Ah! I wish I had cause, Sir. Another great house in the city stopt payment yesterday, and a large sum subscribed to prop the credit of another. Sad times, Mr. Fable!

Fab. Sad times! sad men, honest Check. Men make the times.

Check. Very true, very true, Sir. Ah, one need not go far from home to know that, Sir. In poor old Mr. Beverley's time, when we carried on business in Thread-needle-street, those were days, Mr. Fable! I wish we were on the other side of Temple-bar again!

Fab. No, no; you are right just where you are, friend. The two sides of Temple-
bar

bar have changed hands, Check. The gay, smart, airy sparks, of the west end of the town, have all taken to business, and are turned sheriffs and aldermen; and the merchants, bankers, and tradesmen, are your principal persons of pleasure now-a-days.

Check. Ah, I am afraid so. Here's a house, forsooth! my old lady always entertaining company at home, and my young master always abroad; night turned into day, and day turned into night! It was not so in my old master's time. Never out of the regular channel; sure and moderate profit; quiet, sober living; a plain joint and a pudding on week days, and, perhaps, two joints and two puddings on Sunday!

Fab. Nay, nay, don't be melancholy, Check. You may live to see two puddings on table again, perhaps.

Check. We have no hopes but in you, Mr. Fable; no hope but in you, Sir! Every thing would go to wreck and ruin, if it was not for you, Sir.

Fab. Come, come; cheer up, honest Check! your young master will take up shortly. He has a good heart, and a good understanding.

Check. I wish he would make less use of his heart, and more of his understanding, Sir. He is as generous as a prince, and he thinks all his acquaintance as honest and generous as himself. Let him mind his friend,

friend, Mr. Denier, Sir. There's a young man for you! merry and wise, I warrant him! He knows that a shilling is a serious thing; that a penny saved is a penny got; and two and two makes four, Sir.

Fab. Beverley will find it out at last, Check.—Have you prepared the books and papers as I directed you?

Check. I have, Sir.

Fab. Very well. Let them be ready for inspection this very morning; and tell Mr. Beverley I am gone to the Bank; but desire he would not be out of the way at my return, as I have something of consequence to say to him. Good morrow, Check!

Check. Good morrow to your honour! I shall be sure to let Mr. Beverley know, Sir. [*Exit FABLE.*]—Oh, here comes his gentleman, as they call him. I wish there was not such a gentleman within the bills of mortality.

Enter HANDY.

Check. Good morrow to you Mr. Handy! Good morrow!

Handy. What! my old Rule of Three! are you there? good morrow to you!

Check. Mr. Beverley is not up yet, I suppose.

Handy. Then you suppose wrong, Old Threadneedle! He is up, I assure you.

Check.

Check. Indeed! why he is more early than ordinary, Mr. Handy.

Handy. Much later than ordinary, Master Check. He has not been to bed yet.

Check. Mercy on me! past eight in the morning, and not gone to bed yet?

Handy. No, he's not come home from the masquerade.

Check. The masquerade! Oh, now you have accounted for it.

Handy. Yes, I had some thoughts of being at the Pantheon myself, but—

Check. What! at the sixpenny Pantheon at Islington, Mr. Handy?

Handy. Sixpenny Pantheon! S'death what d'ye mean, Sir? do you take me for a little shopkeeping mechanic, or one of your dapper city clerks, that draws his pen from under his ear in the evening, to go and drink tea at Bagnigge Wells or Dobney's Bowling Green? No, Sir; let me tell you I frequent no diversions but those of persons of quality. Plays now and then, operas twice a week, and masquerades whenever there are any.—A lady of my particular acquaintance—of the first fashion I assure you, old gentleman,—had provided me a ticket, and a domino, with a smart hat and feather, and diamond button and loop to it.—But as the devil would have it, my lord du—zouns, what was I saying?—Her husband, I say, happening to come in at
an

an unfortunate moment, saw the dress lying in her apartment. My lady—a devilish clever woman upon my soul—turned it off with a laugh, and told him she had provided them on purpose for him, in order to surprise him with a piece of conjugal gallantry. So away they went to the Pantheon together, and I was obliged to amuse myself with another woman of quality who kept house all the evening, to console myself for my disappointment.

Check. You imagine I have a large portion of faith, I believe, Mr. Handy.

Handy. Faith!—Why have I offered to borrow any money of you, you old multiplication-table? Eh!

Check. You have not taken that liberty with me, because you knew I would lend you none: but you are rather too familiar with your betters methinks.

Handy. They are familiar with us, and encourage familiarities on our side.—Nay, if you would follow my advice, I would engage to make a fortune even for you, old Methusalem!

Check. For me, Mr. Handy!

Handy. Ay, for you, old boy! What do you think now of making love to Mrs. Golding? Her husband's abroad, you know. Intrigues are the mode, and she loves to be in the fashion.—Devil take me, if I don't think she and you would make an excellent

excellent *tête-à-tête*—Shalum and Hilpa! Eh, my old antediluvian.

Check. A truce with your wit, good Mr. Handy; and please to let your master know that Mr. Fable desires to see him on some particular business as soon as he is stirring,—which, perhaps, may be about dinner-time.

Handy. What! do you pretend to joke too? Pounds, shillings, and pence—you had best stick to that, old gentleman.

Check. They won't stick to you long, I am afraid, young gentleman. Ha! ha!

Handy. Again! You are trying to copy after old master Fable, I warrant you.—A fly, dry, queer old buck, that Mr. Fable! He don't much approve of our proceedings, I believe. The people call my master the Macaroni Banker, he says. [*Laugh heard.*]—Gadso! yonder my master comes, faith—and along with him his bosom friend, Mr. Denier—a snake in his bosom too, if I am not mistaken. I never could endure that shrewd spark since I heard him upon the chapter of vails—which he never gives to other people's servants; but, for fear of raising the wages at home, suffers them to be taken by his own. A young curmudgeon! worse than a liquorish old dotard, if possible.—What say you, Grandfire?—[*Laugh again.*]—But, hush! they are here.—Now you may deliver your errand to him yourself, old gentleman.

[*Check and Handy retire a little.*

Enter

Enter BEVERLEY and DENIER.

[BEVERLEY *in a domino*; DENIER *also in a masquerade-dress.*]

Bev. Support a character at masquerade! Absurd and ridiculous!—and a vulgar idea too, that never entered the head of a gentleman.

Denier. Oh, my habit gave me no trouble of that sort—yet I did not wear it from choice, but from convenience. One of the managers of Coven-Garden theatre—for there are about five and forty of them, you know—lent me the dress—and I don't see why I should be expected to support a character in it any more than those who usually wear it.—Eh, Beverley?

Bev. No, to be sure. They who say the softest things, and succeed most with the women, enter into the spirit and genius of the place the most happily. Gallantry and intrigue, not wit and humour, are the objects of a masquerade.

Denier. I beg your pardon, Beverley. I know more than one or two professed jokers, that rehearse their parts for a fortnight before-hand, and write down all the good things they shall say; but, as ill luck will have it, for want of courage and opportunity, never utter one of them; and yet, resolving they shall not be lost to the world, send them, ready cut and dry, to the

the news-papers, as having been their extempore fallies and masquerade pleasantries.

Bev. Oh, I know the little haberdashers of small wit; I know them, Denier, and thank you for your description of them.—But who the deuce was that very elegant-looking woman that lord Robert Sprightly stuck so close to for most part of the evening? I have a strong notion it was lady Sarah Brilliant—very like her figure; or Harriot Freelove—but her—she's common, you know—her he would not have followed so warmly.—Oh, Check, are you there?—Handy too? [*Check and Handy come forward.*] Have you set my night-things in my bed-chamber?

Handy. They are all ready, Sir.

Bev. Did you present Sir John Squanderfield's notes for acceptance, Check?

Check. I did, Sir.

Bev. Any cards, Handy?—And were they good bills, Check?

Handy. The cards, tickets, and messages lie on your dressing-table, Sir.

Bev. Very well.—And were Sir John's notes duly accepted, Check?

Check. They ought to have been duly *protested*, Sir.—Not good bills—not worth a farthing, Sir. I have not given him credit for them.

Bev. Well, let him have due notice, d'ye hear, Check?—And do you call at the *Sgavoir*, and let them know that I shall dine

there to-day, d'ye hear, Handy?—And do you come to me with the state of Sir John's account, as soon as I am up, dy'e hear, Check?

Check. The account is ready, Sir; but Mr. Fable desires to speak with you as soon as you are up, Sir. He is gone into the city, but will return before you are stirring, and has particular business.

Bev. I shall be ready to attend him.—Let me be called about one, d'ye hear, Handy?—I have nothing further to say to you at present, Check.

Check. Mighty well, Sir.

Bev. Handy, wait in my chamber.

Handy. I shall, Sir.

[*Exeunt Check and Handy severally.*]

Manent BEVERLEY and DENIER.

Bev. You'll dine with us at the *Scavoir*, Denier?

Denier. That's impossible. Lady Quaver, who subscribes to the opera, has lent her box to Mrs. Carlton and Lydia this evening, and I have promised to attend them; so we must make a short early dinner at home. You will hardly rise from table before the *finale*.

Bev. Time enough to see the Heinel walk over the course, perhaps: but the places of public diversion do keep most disorderly hours to be sure. As to the play-houses, I scarce ever attempt to peep into them. There is no getting a mouthful of
tragedy

tragedy or comedy without baulking one's appetite for every thing else. But Lydia is fond of plays too; and the little prude is so eager and punctual, she is as sure to be at the drawing up of the curtain as if she went to keep places.

Denier. Come, come, after all, you are very partial to my ward, Beverley. She is severe upon your gaiety, and you rally her prudery. You both think it worth while to find fault with each other; and that's a dreadful symptom, Beverley.

Bev. No, no; not so far gone as that neither.—The girl has some good natural qualities; but she has not mixed with the world enough.—She is like one of our English coaches—made of good stuff, and not ill fashion'd—but wants the high Paris varnish, Denier.

Denier. I have a good mind to acquaint her with your comparison.—She'll varnish you till you appear like lord Rusty's pictures—not much the better for it.—But, apropos to your simile,—after your coach has set you down to dinner in St. James's Street, can you send it to carry us to the opera?

Bev. To be sure. They are not put up yet. I'll give orders about it immediately.

Denier. Stay! Suppose it takes me home then; and I'll tell them your direction.—I shall hardly get a chair at this time in the morning.

Bev. Be it so. Good night to you—But, Denier!

Denier. Well.

Bev. There is to be another masquerade next week, at the Haymarket. Will you go?

Denier. No—hang it! next week is too soon for it.—So much of it makes it grow nauseous.

Bev. It will be a genteel thing.

Denier. A genteel masquerade!—Oh, that's the devil, Beverley. The company at a masquerade should be almost as various as the characters they represent.—Countesses and sempstresses, lords, aldermen, blacklegs, and Oxonians.—Make your masquerade too genteel, and it must be very dull, Beverley.

Bev. All the fine women in town will be there. It is to be given by the club at Arthur's. I can supply you with tickets.

Denier. Can you?—Well then—come, for once I will go with you.

Bev. Now, if you could prevail on Lydia to go too—

Denier. No; she won't take the Paris varnish, Beverley.

Bev. I am sorry for it. Then there's no hopes of her.

Denier. Poor Beverley! Adieu!

Bev. Poor Lydia, I say. I'll go to bed and dream of her reformation. Good night to you.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT II.

A C T II.

BEVERLEY'S dressing-room. *A writing-desk and dressing-table, chairs, &c.*

Bell rings two or three times violently; at length enter HANDY in a morning dress, rubbing his eyes.

Handy. **R**ING, ring, ring! The devil's in Mr. Beverley to-day, I think. He desires to be waked about one or two, and is ready to pull the bells out of the pullies between eleven and twelve. [*Rings*] Again! I'll be with you in a moment, Sir.—[*Yawns*].—If he had been at deep play last night, I should have thought his losses had disturbed him—or if he had been drinking, that his rest was spoil'd with sickness and head-ache.—But to come home sober, and in good humour, and then drag one out of bed like a school-boy or an apprentice—[*Rings again*] Well, well, I am coming—Stay till I can get to you, Sir. [*Going.*] Not he, faith—here he is—walking in his sleep for aught I know—for I am sure, I am hardly awake yet. [*Yawning.*]

Enter BEVERLEY.

Bev. Oh, you are here I see. I thought you were dead, Handy.

Handy. Dead asleep, Sir. I had hardly got warm in bed, in my first doze, Sir.

[*Yawning.*]

Bev. Come, come, my breakfast. I have no time for dozing and dreaming. To keep my engagements at night, I must dispatch a good deal of business in the morning. [*Sits.*] Reach me that bundle of papers. [*Handy brings them from the desk*] I must answer these letters.—Now chocolate, Handy; chocolate immediately.

Handy. [*aside.*] Whew! [*Exit yawning.*]

Bev. [*untying the bundle*]. Say what they will of your dull fellows and drudges, men of spirit are your only persons of dispatch—diligent in their business, for the sake of getting rid of it—not working slowly, grub, grub, like a mole, but straining to the goal like a racer.—Let me see, what have I here? [*Looking at one of the letters.*] Oh, a letter from Mr. Golding's old Quaker friend and correspondent Ephraim Quiet of Bristol.

Re-enter HANDY.

Handy. The chocolate, Sir.

Bev. Very well.—Set it down, Handy—and tell Check to come to me with the
account

account I spoke to him about, when I came home last night.

Handy. He's here already, Sir, and Mr. Fable too.

Enter FABLE, attended by CHECK, with books and papers.

Bev. [*rising.*] Mr. Fable, your very humble servant.

Fable. Oh, your servant, your servant. —Are you sure you have all the books and papers with you, Check?

Check. Very sure, Sir.

Fable. And have you the instrument from my attorney?

Check. It is here, Sir.

Fable. And the balances of the several accounts are all right and exact?

Check. To the sixteenth of a farthing, Sir; I have proved them again and again, Sir.

Fable. Very well. Lay them on the table then. I shall be with you presently in the computing-house.

Check. You will be sure to find me there, Sir. [*Lays down books, &c. and exit.*

Fable. And now indulge me with a word or two in private, Mr. Beverley.

Bev. Pray be seated, Sir.—Handy, wait in the antichamber.

Handy. I shall, Sir.

[*Exit.*

Manent FABLE and BEVERLEY, sitting.

Fable [after a short pause]. I am afraid, I have broken in upon you rather abruptly, Mr. Beverley.

Bev. Not at all, Sir.

Fable. My business is pressing, and I must be as abrupt in disclosing it.

Bev. Pray, what is it, Sir?

Fable. I should wish to administer comfort, rather than to distress or surprise you; but there is no time for delicacies or room for palliation.

Bev. You amaze me. What do you mean, Sir?

Fab. Don't be too much alarmed neither; don't let it totally discourage you. You are young, you know—

Bev. Relieve me from suspense, I beseech you, Sir.

Fable. Nay, I can't say it is downright ruin neither.

Bev. Ruin, Mr. Fable!

Fable. No; Not absolutely. Your credit and character may be both a little shaken by it at first, indeed; but, with industry, thank heaven, you will have time and opportunity to re-establish them.

Bev. You keep me on the rack, let me comprehend you. Be plain, Sir!

Fab. In a word then—what do you think of the failure of the house?

Bev.

Bev. Sir!

Fab. Stopping payment?

Bev. Impossible!

Fab. Ten days ago I was of your opinion.—But those papers, Mr. Beverley, among which are copies of the last letters from Mr. Golding, will convince you that the danger is imminent.

Bev. Why—Why was not I more early apprised of this, Mr. Fable?

Fab. You have a great deal on your hands, you know; and I did not care to interrupt your amusements, or damp your vivacity, till I had examined and settled the state of your affairs. I was in hopes, indeed, matters had not been so desperate.—But one misfortune is always accompanied by another, and another followed by more.—The insurance not being done on the Speedwell and Thetis, owing to the miscarriage of Mr. Golding's letters from Bengal, the wreck of both those Indiamen, as well as Mr. Golding's other losses in India; the failure of the houses at Amsterdam; the late run upon our own; and the bills we have accepted, being so soon payable—are unlucky circumstances, all concurring to perplex and embarrass us.

Bev. And what—what's to be done then, Mr. Fable?

Fab. Oh, don't be too uneasy! the shock is rather violent and sudden, to be sure; but

but I hope to extricate you with honour and reputation.

Bev. You revive me—By what means, Sir?

Fab. When you have look'd into the vouchers which Check has left with you, you will see the necessity of executing this instrument, constituting me your sole trustee and creditor; I having undertaken to satisfy every other claim and demand upon the house.—All that concerns me is, that in order to come handsomely through this business, and to appear in earnest to the world, we must exact some co-operation on your part, some little sacrifices from you, Mr. Beverly.

Bev. Sacrifices from me! what sacrifices, Mr. Fable?

Fab. Not that I think they will affect you much neither. I was happy, to be sure, to see you keeping the very best company, making a figure on the turf, regularly attending the hunt, and entertaining handsomely both here, and at Wimbledon.—But people in business are liable to these accidents—and pleasure, you know, must give way when pressing exigencies require it. Put your horses to sale, part with your hounds, sell your villa—and as a narrower plan of living, a system of œconomy, will render all the plate and present furniture unnecessary, I think it will be adviseable
to

to let this house too. A smaller will serve to carry on the business.

Bev. Sell my horses and hounds! part with my houses! dispose of my plate, Mr. Fable! surely this is being rather too precipitate. It should be very maturely considered, whether we cannot smother these evils, without letting them burst into a flame immediately.

Fab. That has been thoroughly considered, depend upon't—nay, I have already convened the capital creditors, and convinced them of the certainty of their demands being satisfied, on the plan I have proposed to you. They are persuaded that the house will ultimately prove good and sufficient, and have engaged to support it. Some few indeed seemed to doubt your concurrence and perseverance; but I, who think I know you better, undertook to answer for both. The truth is, you have no alternative.—The affair is publick by this time, and the eyes of the whole world are upon you—But courage, Beverly! you have youth, as I told you, and honour, and abilities. They are now put to the test, and I have no fear of your conduct. When you have finished your breakfast, run your eye over the account, read Mr. Golding's last letters, examine the deed of trust, and consider what I have said to you. Your servant! Good day to you! Your servant! [*Exit.*

B E V E R-

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B E V E R-

BEVERLEY *alone.*

What is all this?—Vessels uninsured! Failure of correspondents! Letters from Mr. Golding! Losses in India!—Sure our situation cannot be so bad as he has represented it.—Let me look into these writings! Let me examine this account!—Handy!—*[sitting.]* The book of fate could scarcely be more dreadful to me than this mass of papers.

Enter HANDY.

Handy. Sir!

Bev. What do you do here, rascal! I am busy. How dare you interrupt me?

Handy. I thought you had called, Sir.

Bev. Get out of the room, firrah, or I'll—

Handy. I beg your pardon, Sir. I am gone, sir—What the deuce is the matter with him this morning? *[Exit.*

BEVERLEY *alone.*

What an unfeeling animal is a mere person of business! Mr. Fable has stunned me: I am thunderstruck: and yet there was a serenity in his manner, a malicious calm in his countenance, that cut me to the soul—I am distracted—I can neither read, nor write, nor think.—Handy! Where are you, rascal? *[Enter Handy]* Why did not you

you take these things away, as I ordered you?

Handy. I thought you had not done breakfast, Sir.—A card from Sir Charles Easy, Sir. [*giving it.*

Bev. Give me no cards, rascal! [*throwing it away.*

Handy. The man waits for an answer, Sir.

Bev. I can send no answer. I'm ill, I'm busy, I'm—I'll send an answer by and by.—I'll send an answer by and by.

Handy. Very well. I'll let him know, Sir. [*Exit.*

BEVERLEY alone.

Let me see! let me collect my thoughts a little! Suppose I advise with Denier! suppose—

Enter HANDY.

Handy. A letter, Sir!—requires no answer they say. [*Exit.*

BEVERLEY alone.

From Lucy! I know her hand. [*looking at the superscription.*] I must look into it; but what poor spirits have I at present to peruse letters of gaiety! Her tenderness too—[*opens and reads*] What's this?

“Sir Harry Flutter has heard of your
“misfortunes, and convinced me that I
“should

"should be a burthen to you. He has
 "offered to be my friend, so adieu, Be-
 "verley!

"Your's L U C Y."

Confusion!—the business is publick in-
 deed then—But so soon to desert me!—To
 be the cast lover of a cast mistress to half
 the town? But let her go! let her go! An
 ungrateful jade! My friends will execrate
 her. All my numerous acquaintance will
 despise her. She'll be the scoff, the scorn
 of—

*Enter Lord RIOT, Sir HELTER SKEL-
 TER, Col. RAKISH, and SCANTY.*

Lord Riot. Beverley!—why what the
 devil is all this? the whole town is talking
 of you. Is there any truth in this story?
 You are undone, they say.

Bev. No: not undone, my lord!

Col. Rak. The St. James's Coffee-house
 is full of it, and Betty talks of nothing else.

Bev. Damnation!

Sir Helt. I was offered ten to one at the
 Cocoa-Tree that you and all your partners
 would be in the Gazette next Saturday.
 Shall I take the odds, Beverley?

Bev. The house has not stopt payment,
 Sir!—Confusion!

Scanty. No, no, not so bad as that—a
 little crash, indeed—but I said the house
 would

would not stop payment. I was always your friend, Mr. Beverley.

Bev. I am obliged to you, Sir.—Vexation!

Col. Rak. They say, old Golding has made a sad hand of it in India. An old blockhead! What did he meddle for? why you could have ruined yourself fast enough without his assistance.—Poor little Lucy too! she'll be on the *pavée* again. I have half a mind to take compassion on her myself.—But she's so cursed fond of Beverley, there would be no dependance on her.

Lord Riot. Well, but Beverley! Your place at Wimbledon is to be put up at auction, it seems.—A going, a going, a going!—So we are to have no dinner there next Sunday, I suppose.

Bev. No, no, no, no,—my lord. Distraction!

Sir Helt. As you'll part with that set of bay ponies, and the Phaeton, I suppose, I wish you'd give me the refusal. You should think of your friends, Beverley.

Bev. Another time! another time, Sir.

Lord Riot. Ay, I know we interrupt him. He is in the midst of all his writings and accounts, you see. I shall be glad to see you, when you have leisure. Good day to you, Beverley!

Sir Helt. }

Col. Rak. }

Adieu! adieu, Beverley!

[*Exeunt Lord Riot, Sir Helt. and Col. Rak.*
Manent

Manent SCANTY and BEVERLEY.

Scanty. See what a set of washy-minded fellows these are now!—It is well you are rid of them. Did not I always warn you to be cautious of your company?

Bev. I thank you for your advice, but it distresses me at present, Sir.

Scanty. Well, well, I'll say no more then—I am glad to find matters not so bad as they have been reported. You'll keep your head above water yet, I hope.—I just staid to mention the affair of the twenty pounds you promised me the last time I saw you.

Bev. This is not a time for affairs of that sort, Sir.

Scanty. Well, well—I would not have mentioned it—but that last match at billiards was not quite settled, you know.

Bev. There, Sir—there's a bank-note of the value.—Now leave me, I beseech you, Sir.

Scanty. Well, well,—I see you are busy, and I will leave you—but for the future remember my counsel—stick to my advice—always be cautious in the choice of your company, Beverley! [Exit.

BEVERLEY *alone.*

So, so! so! so!—This is *the world*, as they call it—A pack of hollow friends, and despicable

despicable acquaintance! How weak have I been, to give my heart to these wretches, who have souls incapable of mutual attachment!—Callous to distress, and dead to the feelings of humanity!—How I long to see Denier! He is a true friend—frugal without avarice, and chearful without dissipation. He would both advise and assist me.—He would presently—

Enter DENIER.

Ha, Denier! I was this moment wishing for you. You have heard, I suppose—

Den. I have; I have, Beverley; and ran to you immediately—though I had particular business in the city too this morning—but a friend has promised to transact it for me. How are you, Beverley?

Bev. What a blow, my friend! from whom had you the first news of it?

Den. From Mr. Fable himself. He came to me on my own affairs, as well as about a large remittance which he has just received on account of Lydia.

Bev. Lydia!—Oh Denier!—Lydia! [*sighing*]—a large remittance did you say?

Den. Yes, from her friends in India, who consigned her to our family. A very considerable remittance, indeed—But Mr. Fable is made trustee, I find—They treat her as the court of Chancery does a lunatick. We

are committees of her person, and Mr. Fable committee of the estate.

Bev. Excuse me, Denier; but the very shadow of mirth is at present unseasonable. I am glad, however, that Lydia is likely to be so amply provided for. [*Sighing.*]

Den. So am I: and I am glad too that you have always professed so total an indifference about her; as a disappointment from any reverse of fortune, in case you had fixed your affections on her, would have been an additional mortification.—But Beverly!

Bev. My friend!

Den. You are convinced, I believe, of the truth of my regard for you.

Bev. I never doubted it.

Den. That I have the most affectionate friendship for you.

Bev. I am sure of it.

Den. You don't imagine me capable of proposing any thing that might be disagreeable to you?

Bev. The last man on earth I should suspect of it.

Den. I think too, on your part, Beverly, that you would not, from a mere point of delicacy, oppose or repine at my happiness, if it did not interfere with your own.

Bev. No—to be sure I should not.—But what is all this? Explain.

Den.

Den. You must know then, Beverley, that I began very early to be captivated with Lydia.

Bev. Eh!

Den. But fancying you entertained a partiality for her, I smothered my inclination out of friendship for you. But as you meant only superficial gallantry, I now wish to make her serious proposals.

Bev. Proposals to Lydia?

Den. Yes, proposals of marriage; and indeed it seems almost to have been the wish of her friends to bring about such an alliance by placing her in our family.

Bev. That's true—that did not occur to me at first, I confess—she too, I suppose, has given you some hopes.—I wish you happy—I wish you—I wish you a great deal of happiness, Mr. Denier. [*disordered.*]

Den. Thank you, my dear friend, thank you!—But come, come, Beverley! Mr. Fable's news has quite disheartened you. We must not see you too much cast down, neither. This is but a cloud. You will break out again with double splendor presently.—Can I be of any service to you? Shall I look into your papers—and examine your accounts?

Bev. Not at present, I am obliged to you—not at present, Mr. Denier.

Den. Oh, I had forgot. All my money is locked up: but if you should want a

purchaser for the Beverley estate, on that occasion, I dare say, my friends would supply me. You may always command me, you know.

Bev. I know it. I am obliged to you.

Den. Let me see! [*looking at his watch*] it is not so late as I thought it was—that Solomon is a puzzling, stupid, old fellow—I had better go up to the Alley, and look after the business myself, I believe—unless I could be of any use to you by staying here, Beverley.

Bev. Not in the least. I beg I mayn't hinder you.

Den. Good day to you then! I can turn an eighth I dare say this morning. Good day, Beverley! [*Exit.*]

BEVERLEY *alone.*

Now I am completely miserable. Fool, idiot, that I have been! to trifle with a delicate female heart—to trifle with my own!—Oh, Lydia! I am now, for the first time, thoroughly sensible of my affection for you; and now to discover it, only to add to my wretchedness! Distraction!—Denier too seems to wear a different aspect—at least my imagination, jaundiced by my misfortunes, paints him of another colour.—But Lydia! after the impertinence of my former behaviour, how despicable must I appear to her! What a humiliating distance

distance has fortune now thrown between us! Mrs. Golding here! New torture! Ha! Lydia with her! Oh my heart! How shall I look up to her!

Enter Mrs. GOLDING, in a morning dishabillé.

Mrs. Gold. Nay, come in, child! pray come in! I must speak to poor Beverley. Come in Miss Lydia, I beg of you [*Beverley runs to the door and introduces Lydia*].—Ay, take care of her, kinsman! She is a delicate soul, and as much shocked as if she were your sister.—But, for heaven's sake, child, what is this rigmarole story that Mr. Fable has distracted us about?

Bev. A very serious affair indeed, Madam.

Mrs. Gold. Serious! He's always serious, I think—preaching, preaching, for ever preaching: like lady Tott'nam, that builds all the Methodist chapels.—But it's a strange thing Mr. Golding should never write me word of all this business.—

Bev. I have not yet examined the proofs, but dare say, Mr. Fable has just grounds for his proceedings.

Mrs. Gold. Lord, lord! How this breaks into all my arrangements! The glass over my dressing-room chimney-piece is stuck round with cards, one upon another—I am promised the whole town over for these

three months. But it's no matter—they'll be the death of me—so it don't signify.

[*Throws herself into a chair.*

Bev. We must look forward, Madam. The prospect is a little gloomy at present, but promises to clear again. No endeavours shall be wanting on my part.

Mrs. Gold. No, I dare say. You were always a good creature—a great favourite of mine you know always—But I can't tell what possessed them to make you a man of business. If they had been ruled by me, they would have put you into the guards. You would have made a sweet figure in a regimental: would not he, Lydia? And then you'd have had as little to do as Colonel Parade or Captain Gillyflower.—But I'll look into the red book—the only book worth looking into—and see if we can't use our interest to get you some little snug sinecure—a commissioner of trade, perhaps, or a lord of the admiralty.

Bev. I begin to feel we have no dependance but on ourselves, Madam.

Mrs. Gold. Well, well—may be not, kinsman—and yet we have a very genteel set of acquaintance.—But, mercy on me, what a figure do I make, if any body should call, in this muslin shade, and queen's night-cap! Lydia, my dear! let me leave you here a minute or two while I shuffle on my things—and then come to me in
my

my dressing-room. Your conversation is better than hartshorn or lavender. Poor Beverley here looks as dismal as young Lady Grizzle on her marriage with old Sir Solomon. *[Exit.]*

Manent BEVERLEY and LYDIA.

[They remain some time silent.]

Bev. Excuse me, Madam, if I venture to express how deeply I am sensible of your appearing to be affected by my misfortunes: and yet I cannot but confess that I feel your compassion almost as painfully as a reproach—for I am conscious I have not deserved it.

Lyd. Touched as I am with the reverse of your situation, Mr. Beverley, I will not dissemble to you that I am pleased with the change in your behaviour.

Bev. Still, still, this very approbation serves to reproach me with the impropriety of my late conduct towards you. I feel it. I request your forgiveness of it; and should be happy to pass the rest of my life in endeavouring to atone it.

Lyd. Make no apologies to me, Mr. Beverley; I have no right to expect them, nor has your conduct rendered them necessary: most young gentlemen who pique themselves on their knowledge of the world,

act much in the same manner as you behaved to me.

Bev. It is too true; but it is not the swarm of coxcombs that renders them less impertinent or troublesome. I ought not to have adopted their contemptuous airs, without being master also of their tame insensibility; yet I had youth to plead in excuse for my vanities; and I flatter myself, that time and reflection—and another motive that distracts me when I think of it—might have rendered me an object less unworthy your compassion. Calamity has torn the veil from my eyes, and I now see but too plainly, not only your excellence, but my own imperfections.

Lyd. Calamity is a severe master, yet amendment can scarce be purchased too dearly: and as your errors have been venial, your distress may be but transient; nay, may, perhaps, at last be the means of your happiness.

Bev. Impossible! Impossible! However I may be restored to affluence, I can never, never taste of happiness. I have thrown away—perhaps wantonly too—I have thrown away the jewel that should have been the pride and blessing of my life.—Oh, Lydia! the feelings of worldly distress are nothing to the agonies of a despairing affection. My situation extorts from me what I have hitherto endeavoured to
conceal

conceal even from myself. I love you—I feel I long have loved you—though wretch and fool enough to be almost ashamed of a passion in which I ought to have gloried. I am now punished for it—heaven knows, severely punished—perhaps too severely—by losing the very hopes of ever obtaining you.

Lyd. Do not run from one dangerous extreme to another, Mr. Beverley; but guard against despondency, as well as vanity and presumption. I see you are much agitated, much dejected; and what it would, perhaps, have been dangerous and unpardonable to have owned to you but yesterday, to-day I shall not scruple to declare. Hurried away, as you were, by a torrent of fashionable vanities, and the poor ambition of keeping high company, I thought I could discern in your mind and disposition no mean understanding, nor ungenerous principles—too good for the associates you had selected, and too susceptible not to be in danger from such society. It is no wonder, therefore, if I felt any growing partiality for you, that I endeavoured to restrain it.

Bev. To restrain it! Say rather to extinguish it. Oh, I now perceive all my wretchedness.—But to be supplanted by my bosom-friend! by Denier!

Lyd. I am at a loss to comprehend you.

Bev.

Bev. He confessed to me his passion for you but this very morning—not an hour ago he declared to me his intention of making you serious proposals.

Lyd. Such proposals would be sure of being rejected—rejected with the utmost indignation.

Bev. What do I hear? May I still hope then? And are you resolved not to listen to his addresses?

Lyd. I am too well acquainted with his character. His manners, indeed, are lively, and his worldly turn enables him to work himself into the friendship of others; especially, those like yourself, Mr. Beverley—of an undefining open-hearted character; in order to avail himself of their foibles, promote his interest, and gratify his penury. Rely not too securely on the warmth of his professions! steady to no point but his interest, you will find him shifting in his conduct according to the revolutions in your fortune. He seemed at first desirous to unite me to you; but now, hearing, I suppose, of the alteration in your circumstances, and the late remittances in my favour, it is perfectly agreeable to his sentiments, to endeavour to supplant you. As yet, however, he has made me no overtures.

Bev. So far then at least he is not unfaithful. But Oh, my Lydia! may I interpret

pret your repugnance to his addreffes as an argument in my favour?

Lyd. I have already frankly declared my opinion of your character. It now remains with you to prove the truth of that opinion, and to determine my resolution accordingly. Do but bear up againſt adverſity, ſo as to ſhew yourſelf equal to the poſſible return of proſperity—a trial, perhaps, ten times more dangerous—and be aſſured, Mr. Beverley, that with the approbation of my friends, I ſhall be happy to give every proof of my eſteem for ſo valuable a character.

Bev. My deareſt Lydia! [*kiffing her hand*] Modest, amiable, Lydia! When you avow eſteem, let me preſume to conſtrue it affection! Oh Lydia, you have made me fond of my misfortunes. Eaſe and affluence corrupted me, and had ſo weakened and enervated my mind, that the rough ſtroke of adverſity would have ſtunned me beyond the power of recovery, had not your gentle hand raiſed me to the hope of happineſs. Take your pupil, Lydia; and render him—for you only can effect it—oh render him worthy of ſo dear, ſo exquisite a monitrefs!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT

A C T III.

AN APARTMENT IN GOLDING'S HOUSE.

Enter Servant shewing in TROPICK.

Serv. **W**HAT must I say to Mr. Fable, Sir!

Trop. Only let him know that his old friend Mr. Tropick, the ship's husband, desires to speak with him.

Serv. I shall, Sir. [Exit.

TROPICK *alone.*

Yes, I shall speak to him—and pretty roundly too, I believe.—What times we live in! No morals, no order, no decency! Barefaced villainy at one end of the town, and villainy in a mask at the other!—But my old friend here a hypocrite! I should almost as soon have mistrusted myself. It is an unthankful office to give advice and reproof; but it is the duty, as well as privilege, of those who have been long acquainted with each other, to let an old friend know, that all the world thinks him a scoundrel.—Oh, here he is. I'll give it him—I'll lecture him—I'll—

Enter

Enter FABLE.

Fab. Ha! my old friend, Tropick! How are you? How do you?

Trop. Well, very well.

Fab. I am glad on't; I rejoice to see you.

Trop. May be so, may be so.

Fab. And your family?—All well, I hope.

Trop. All very well.

Fab. And the young supercargo?—How does he go on?

Trop. Mighty well, mighty well.

Fab. Excellent!—And his elder brother that was placed at Madrafs, is he removed to Bengal yet, as he proposed?

Trop. He is, he is; but—

Fab. That's right: Madrafs for health, Bengal for wealth!—that's the maxim there, you know.

Trop. Very true, very true; but—

Fab. And Mrs. Tropick too—How is she? How is your wife?

Trop. P'fhaw! let my wife alone: I want to speak with you, old Fable; I want to speak with you.

Fab. Well; why don't you then?

Trop. Because you hinder me. You stop my mouth with enquiries, and won't let me squeeze in a syllable edgeways—A plague of your questions!

Fab. Well, speak. I am all attention. What have you to say to me?

Trop.

Trop. Have you a friend or acquaintance in the world?

Fab. I think so; some few true friends, many more very suspicious, and a number of common acquaintance.

Trop. And do you expect to keep one that has common sense or common honesty for the future?

Fab. Yes;—and yourself in particular.—But what's the matter? If you think I have done any thing wrong, it would be but friendly to tell me so.

Trop. I came on purpose to tell you; I came on purpose to abuse you, old Fable.

Fab. I am obliged to you; but for what reason?

Trop. Every honest man should not only abhor a crime, but even keep clear of suspicion.

Fab. Impossible.

Trop. How so?

Fab. Both are not in his power. Not to be criminal, indeed, lies in his own breast; but suspicion and calumny, in the breasts and mouths of others. You consider yourself as an honest man, I suppose.

Trop. Zouns! I know I am, without considering at all.

Fab. And yet, honest as you are, you could no more prevent my thinking you a rascal, were I inclined to believe you one, than I could hinder your calling me so.

Trop.

Trop. I tell you all the world calls you so. It is the talk of the whole city—the Alley is full of it—the 'Change rings with it—and by and by, I suppose, the talkers in Leadenhall-street will harangue about it. You are pretty well paragraphed already, old Fable.

Fab. I can't help their talking or writing. I can only take care not to deserve it.

Trop. Not deserve it!—Why, was not Golding, the great banker, here, your old friend and acquaintance?

Fab. Most intimately so; most confidentially; or, at his departure for India, he would scarce have trusted his whole family and affairs to my care, with the particular charge of young Beverley.

Trop. Oh, did he so?—Now we are come to the point then.—And a fine guardian you have shewn yourself—a pretty friend to Mr. Golding too! You have staggered the credit of the house, driven the poor young fellow almost out of his senses, and made yourself his sole trustee and creditor. Every body sees what you drive at—but the court of chancery may bring you to account yet, old Fable.

Fab. Let the parties file their bill at their pleasure—or rather do you be my chancellor.

Trop. I your chancellor!

Fab.

Fab. Yes, you, my friend. I'll put in my answer immediately—but remember, that while I call upon your judgment in equity, I must also insist on your secrecy.

Trop. What! keep it a secret that you are an honest man?—Let all the world suppose you a scoundrel?

Fab. No matter. Don't let your zeal for my character teach them to unriddle the mystery at present; but rather assist me in carrying on my project. First, however, promise silence. Give me your word, old friend.

Trop. My honour—Now you know you are sure of me.

Fab. I am convinced of it. You must know then, that the danger of the house, and the ruin of young Beverley, is all a mere fiction.

Trop. A lie!—Zouns! to what purpose?

Fab. The best in the world—A white lie, my friend! to rescue Beverley, and save Mr. Golding.

Trop. A white lie?—I don't understand you. Explain.

Fab. The young man was in the high road to destruction, and driving at such a rate that he must soon have overset the whole undertaking.—It was time to pull the check-string.—To speak plainly; intoxicated as he was by pleasure and vanity, and countenanced by Mrs. Golding, who
ought

ought to have discouraged him, direct advice would have been thrown away upon him. But, could I stand by a silent and inactive spectator of the ruin of a whole family? No; finding him incorrigible by softer means, I conjured up the phantom of poverty. The measures I have taken have already brought him to reason; he promises to become a new man; I shall ultimately appear to be a true friend; and the credit of the house will be more firmly established than ever.

Trop. I am speechless—struck dumb—you have taken my breath away—I have not a word to say against you—you are a very worthy, sensible, honest fellow, old Fable. You have redeemed your friend Golding, and will be the making of the young fellow's fortune.

Fab. Nay, I can't take the credit of his reformation entirely to myself neither. He is in love, it seems, with a most amiable young lady, whose tenderness is redoubled by his misfortunes, while no calamity seems to affect his mind but the imaginary want of a fortune suitable to his pretensions to her.

Trop. And how can you answer it to yourself, to retain his money in your hands, when he wishes to make so laudable a use of it?

Fab. I don't mean to retain it. Finding Beverley in so fair a way of amendment, I have already set another wheel in motion, and, unknown to him, circulated a report of a sudden turn of fortune in his favour.

Trop. Unknown to him, d'ye say?

Fab. Totally; and it is pleasant enough to see how awkwardly he receives the civilities which are paid to him in consequence of this report, while, unconscious of the cause, he expects, according to the way of the world, nothing but flights and reproaches. To confirm the report, however, and to put him into good humour with himself again, I mean to send a pretended agent or messenger to him, with letters and considerable remittances, as from Mr. Golding. All I want is a trusty person to discharge such a commission.

Trop. Can I be of any use to you?

Fab. Infinite, if you would undertake this negociation.

Trop. I!—Why, I am unknown in the family, it's true—but then the letters—Mr. Golding's hand, you know—

Fab. Oh, reasons may be assigned for his making use of another hand.—Besides, they won't be examined so nicely. You come to bring money, not to receive it—and that makes a wide difference. But we lose time.—Will you assist me?

Trop.

Trop. I will—hand and heart—body and soul, old Fable. Let me have the stores, sails, masts, and rigging, and I'll fit him out as handsomely as any vessel I ever furnished in my life. You are a true-hearted, sound-bottomed fellow, old Fable. But what an ass have I made of myself!—Here did I come open-mouthed to reproach you for your roguery; and now you have persuaded me to become your accomplice.

Fab. My ally—leagued in honour, not combined and confederated in villainy. But come with me to my closet, and I'll furnish you with the needful.

Trop. I'll follow you; but I must, I must ask your pardon first. It touched me to the quick to hear you were a rascal, and I could not help telling you so.—I beg your pardon again, and again, and again, my friend. You are one of the worthiest men in the world—but, you know, there are not a more silly, empty, insolent, impudent, ignorant, lying vermin, than your framers of common reports and collectors of personal paragraphs—wretches that pretend to know every thing, and know nothing. Your thoughts, words, and actions, they know them all; what you have done, what you are doing, and what you intend to do, they know: know what a papist tells his confessor, or the king whispers the queen: things that never have been,

will be, nor are like to be, still they know—true or false, right or wrong, praise or blame, they don't care a half-penny.—And I, to give a moment's credit to them! Forgive me this once, my friend; and for the future, without certain authority, I'll never believe a word I hear from common report, or depend upon a syllable I read in the news-papers. [Exeunt.]

THE STREET.

Enter Lord RIOT and Colonel RAKISH.

Col. Rak. But do you think there is any truth in this report, my lord?

Lord Riot. Fact—you may depend upon't. A proctor from the city, who came to me about my suit with lady Riot, now depending in the Commons, told me that he heard it at the St. Paul's Coffee-house from a gentleman that brought the news piping hot from Sir George Sterling at Garraway's, and from some other particular friends of old Fable.

Col. Rak. So then Beverley is upon his legs again, and Golding is not ruined after all.

Lord Riot. Full of treasure as a mine, with a certain income as large as a jaghire—sent home whole lacks of rupees by the last Indiamen, and bushels of diamonds as plenty as Scotch pebbles.

Col.

Col. Rak. A lucky turn for Beverley! I wish I had known it before; I would not have blackballed him at Stapylton's; but, faith, I thought he had nothing for it but to shoot himself.

Lord Riot. He is actually meditating a very desperate action. I hear he is going to be married.

Col. Rak. Ay? to whom, my lord?

Lord Riot. Why to Miss—Oh, here he is to give an account of himself.

Enter BEVERLEY.

How do you, how do you, Beverley? Nay, never look so grave and serious, man! I know you have no occasion. But why did you not call as I desired you, Beverley? I love to serve you, and should have been very glad to see you.

Bev. I am obliged to your lordship, but I have been engaged in particular business.

Lord Riot. Business! You used to think pleasure your business.

Bev. And now, thank heaven, I have learnt to think business my pleasure.

Col. Rak. Ah, that's the true language of a man that is making a fortune and rolling in money, my lord. But, Beverley, my dear boy, why did you not call on me, if you ever thought there was the least shadow of an occasion? You must be sure

that all I could command, was entirely at your service.

Bev. I am obliged to you, colonel; but there was not the least necessity for it.

Lord Riot. No, no; so it seems. I am very glad to hear it. Will you look in upon us at Almack's this evening, Beverley?

Bev. It will not be in my power, my lord.

Col. Rak. We dine at the Tilt-Yard Coffee-house to-day. There is some excellent claret. Will you go along with us, Beverley?

Bev. Not now, I thank you, colonel; I am going to Mr. Denier.

Lord Riot. Well; let us see you soon; don't forsake your friends, Beverley.

Col. Rak. No; don't let us lose you; come amongst us soon, my boy. In the mean time, I wish you much joy.

Lord Riot. So do I. Good day, Beverley?

Col. Rak. Good day, good day to you, Beverley!

[*Exeunt Lord Riot, and Col. Rakish.*

BEVERLEY *alone.*

Wish me joy! What do they mean? surely not to insult me! No, no; their manner was frank, and hearty, and cordial. —And yet, I thought they behaved oddly on the first shock of my affairs. But, perhaps, my sensibility was too quick on that occasion,

occasion, and my confusion on the breaking out of my misfortunes made me see every thing through a false medium. Yes, yes, I dare say I wronged my friends, and I am heartily concerned at it.

Enter CASH.

Cash. Oh, Mr. Beverley, your servant! I am glad I have found you. I have just been at your house to desire you to discount these bills. They are indorsed by good men, and have not above a fortnight or three weeks to run, Sir.

Bev. Discount, Mr. Cash? What do you mean? You know I never venture to do any thing of that sort at present.

Cash. Not venture, indeed!—Well said, Mr. Beverley; you are pleased to be pleasant.

Bev. I wish you would please to be serious. I am so I can assure you, Mr. Cash.

Cash. What! you won't discount the bills then?

Bev. No.

Cash. Consider the names at the back of them.

Bev. No matter. It don't suit us.

Cash. "It don't suit us,"—that's the banker's old answer in the negative.—When you're come to that, I am sure you won't do it—I am sorry for it—I must try some other house—Your servant. [*Exit.*

Bev. Yours! Now for Denier. [*Going.*

Enter HAZARD.

Haz. Mr. Beverley! one word with you, if you please.

Bev. [*turning.*] Mr. Hazard! Your pleasure, Sir!

Haz. We have a policy here on Sir Francis Racket, insured for a year for twelve thousand—and we should be glad of your name at the bottom of it.

Bev. My name, Mr. Hazard!

Haz. If you please, Sir.—There is a handsome premium, and Sir Francis is a very good life—He was shewn at the coffee-house yesterday—a very good life—not above six or seven and twenty—a little wild, indeed, but suicide and the hands of justice, you know, are always excepted.

Bev. I pretend to underwrite, Mr. Hazard! Do you want to ruin me intirely?

Haz. Ruin you! ha, ha, ha! ruin you—a very good jest, faith—I wish I was ruined your way, Mr. Beverley. [*Laughing.*

Bev. Do you laugh at me?

Haz. No, no—I don't laugh at you—but upon my word you make me merry, Mr. Beverley.—Poor ruined gentleman! ha, ha!—Will you fill up the policy, Sir?

Bev. No, not at 50 *per Cent.* Sir. You know my situation, and let me tell you, Sir, I look upon your application at this time as impertinent—particularly impertinent.

[*turns aside.*

Haz.

Haz. Know my situation! Lord, how some folks swell on their good fortune! He is turning fine gentleman again already, I perceive.—Impertinent, quotha! I wish he would have set his name to the policy, tho'—I would rather not have had an Israelite among the underwriters—however, let the worst come to the worst, we are sure of little Abraham at last. Impertinent, indeed! [Exit.

B E V E R L E Y *alone.*

This affront, among many other mortifications, is brought upon me by my past folly and imprudence. Not only censured by the sensible and the generous, but reproached by the base, ridiculed by the malicious, and insulted by the meanest of mankind—confusion!—But it is no wonder that I should be treated contemptuously by others, when my conduct has rendered me so thoroughly despicable even to myself. [Exit.

An Apartment in DENIER'S House.

Enter LYDIA and DENIER.

Lyd. Nay, cease, I beseech you, Sir! Do not, by urging me on a point so very disagreeable, render it too painful a task to preserve that respect for you that I wish to maintain!

Den.

Den. Engaging Lydia! How much your reserve becomes you. Yet, let me flatter myself it is mere coyness—and these little pruderies—for so I will suppose them—call forth new graces in your character, and revive the flame you would attempt to extinguish.

Lyd. It is, however, with a peculiar ill grace, Sir, that you now pretend to discover in me these latent qualifications—You who seemed lately so desirous of recommending Mr. Beverley, and now, from what motive you know best, honouring me with your own addresses.

Den. Beverley!—Beverley is convinced of my inviolable friendship for him—but it is no wonder, Lydia, that I, who had daily and hourly opportunities of contemplating your perfections, should be more deeply struck, than he that saw you but occasionally. I should not, however, such is my regard for him, have urged my own suit, without being previously assured of his absolute indifference.

Lyd. Indifference!—As to that, Sir, Mr. Beverley's indifference, or Mr. Beverley's partiality, in this instance, is not at all material. I am placed in your family, it is true; and my situation in life is not as yet positively ascertained. I was taught to believe, indeed, that I should ere now have been received and acknowledged by
my

my friends: but I consider some late events as an earnest of their speedy appearance, and I trust they will offer no violence to my inclinations. I am determined, at least in my own breast; and be assured, Sir, that no interest, no force, no time, shall shake my resolution.

Den. Your friends, Madam, may possibly be of a different opinion; and though I might not wish them to put any constraint on you, they will hardly be partial to the ruinous state of poor Beverley.

Lyd. In you, Sir, his intimate friend, such a reflection is particularly ungenerous: yet do not presume too much upon that notion, Sir! Whatever I may think of Mr. Beverley, fortune at least appears inclined to favour him.

Den. Riddles! riddles, Lydia!

Lyd. You have not heard the late news then. He now seems as much courted by prosperity, as he was but lately threatened by misfortunes: and I am this moment going with Mrs. Carlton, to give Mrs. Golding joy on the occasion.

Den. And to congratulate Beverley?

Lyd. Perhaps so—but be that as it may, you must at least allow that I have dealt candidly with you. Grave as I may seem, Sir, I would not wish to appear a prude; and I scorn all coquetry.

[Exit.

D E N I E R

DENIER alone.

Yes, yes; she's fond of Beverley I see—doatingly fond of him—and when a sentimental lady is once touched by a fond passion, the rage is incurable.—But this sudden turn of fortune too in his favour—that I warrant has its effect with her—gold, gold, will have its weight—I shall soon know the particulars.—In the mean time, suppose I make a merit with Beverley of sacrificing my passion to him.—He certainly likes her; and it will be a cheap piece of generosity to resign that which I have no hopes of obtaining. I love to husband my good offices: ay, ay! that's the true policy! to gain the good will of others, without touching your own property.—Make a small present to those that you are sure want nothing at all, and it turns to account, like money put out at high interest.—And ever, ever open your purse, and offer to lend to those who you know have no occasion to borrow!

Enter BEVERLEY.

Ha! Beverley! you're welcome. Good day to you!

Bev. Good day, Denier! I was impatient to see you.

Den. Yes, I dare say. I knew you would not be long out of the house. But come; confess honestly, Beverley! Was this visit wholly

wholly designed for me? Was not it partly—nay chiefly—intended for Lydia?

Bev. Lydia!—Lydia!—I should have been very glad to see Lydia—I hope she is well.

Den. Very well—and very much at your service—very much at your service, Beverley.

Bev. What do you mean?

Den. I mean what I say—and I have been thinking too on what passed at our last meeting, Beverley.

Bev. On what subject?

Den. Nay, nay; there is but one subject of any consequence now, you know. But I am afraid you dissembled with your friend a little. You should be frank and generous with me. The commerce of friendship can't subsist without it; and I have that title to the knowledge of what passes in your breast, Beverley.

Bev. It was then in a state of insurrection, and I was not master of its emotions, nor indeed, well able to marshal or distinguish them: but you know I never scrupled to lay my heart open to you.

Den. Why, to do you justice, I believe your not being explicit, arose from the agitation of your mind at that instant, rather than from want of sincerity—and I was a little slow of apprehension on my part—but now we perfectly understand each other

other.—I see you love Lydia: I am sure of it—and out of friendship and regard to you, my dear Beverley—I frankly give up all my pretensions to her.

Bev. Generous, generous Denier!

Den. Not at all—not at all—all my good offices with her friends, my correspondents in India, Mr. Fable, and your own family, you have a right to command.

Bev. Your kindness overwhelms me. How shamefully was I disposed for a time to do injustice to friendship! I now despise the mean and narrow common-place maxims of our friends falling off from us. There is a jealousy in the unfortunate—an unworthy suspicion of neglect and contempt on account of their distresses.—My slightest acquaintance have given me proofs of their good will, and your friendship is above all acknowledgment.

Den. I am happy in any occasion of testifying my unquestionable regard for you.

Bev. I don't doubt it.

Den. Depend on it.

Bev. My best friend!

Den. My dear, dear Beverley!

[*Exeunt, pressing hands, embracing, protesting, &c.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT

A C T IV.

AN APARTMENT IN GOLDING'S
HOUSE.

Enter FABLE and CHECK.

Fab. **T**HIS way, this way, Check!
And are you sure, quite sure
this is fact?

Check. Too true, Sir.

Fab. Speculated in India-stock, do you
say?

Check. To an incredible amount, Sir!
here's the particular, Sir.

Fab. Let me see—let me see—[*looking
at the paper.*—Confusion!—and had you
no knowledge or suspicion of these trans-
actions till now, Check?

Check. Not the least item, Sir. Little
Smouse the broker is but just gone, and
says he has done more stock for my young
master, than for half the rest of the Alley.

Fab. What imprudence! What madness!

Check. High play, indeed, Sir! Sir Charles
Ducat of Mincing-lane, and my young
master, it seems, have had the whole game
between them. My young master is the
bull, and Sir Charles is the bear. He agreed
for

for stock, expecting it to be up at three hundred by this time; but lack-a-day, Sir, it has been falling ever since.—You know the rescouter day, Sir; and if Mr. Beverley does not pay his differences within these four and twenty hours, the world cannot hinder his being a lame duck.

Fab. It scarce signifies what becomes of him—a prodigal!—But my friend Mr. Golding—

Check. Ay, if Mr. Beverley fails, the whole house must suffer, Sir. Having stood the late run upon us, our credit was firmer than ever.—But, after a tumble in the Alley, our notes will no more pass than a light guinea.

Fab. Is Mr. Beverley within?

Check. I thought I heard him come in just as I was following you hither, Sir.

Fab. Let him know I desire to speak with him.

Check. I will, Sir. [Exit.

FABLE alone.

So!—To trifle with serious matters is playing with fire, I find. The ruin I counterfeited is now becoming real; and the measures I embraced to reform Beverley, and save my friend, will only serve to hasten their destruction. The suddenness of the alarm confounds me. The shortness

ness of the time too!—Oh, you are here' Sir. [Enter Beverley.

Bev. To attend your pleasure, Sir.

Fab. To witness your own irretrievable ruin, Sir!—How comes it, Mr. Beverley, how comes it, I say, that you have hitherto kept your adventuring in the Alley, your infamous gambling in Indiastock so profound a secret from me?

Bev. Spare your reproaches, Mr. Fable! They are needless. I know all my fault, and all my misery. Ruin and infamy now stare me in the face, and drive me to despair. The vain hopes I had cherished of avoiding both are frustrated; and there is not at this moment a more pitiable object than the wretch you now see before you.

Fab. Pitiable! And what part of your conduct, Sir, has entitled you to compassion?—To that compassion which the characteristic humanity of this nation has ever shewn to the unfortunate?—Sometimes, indeed, to the imprudent?—Have you, Sir, any claim to this? You, who have so grossly abused the mutual confidence between man and man, and betrayed the important trust reposed in you—What! a banker! a banker, Mr. Beverley, not only squandering his own fortune, but playing with the property of others!—the property of unconscious persons silently melting away, as if by forgery, under his hands, without their own prodigality!

gality!—And is such a man, because he is at length buried in the ruin he has pulled down on others, an object of compassion? No, Sir, nothing is to be lamented but the mildness of his punishment.

Bev. The very atrociousness of his crime, the pungency of his guilt and remorse, which put him upon a rack severer than any penal laws could devise, still render him an object of pity.

Fab. Your remorse and reformation, I fear, were but hypocrisy. Where was that ingenuous confidence that would else have prompted you to lay open this dark transaction, as well as the rest of your unjustifiable extravagance? Your candour, in that instance, would at least have argued the sincerity of your professions, and afforded a real proof of your penitence.

Bev. Oh, Sir, do not attribute my silence to deceit! I had been taught to hope and believe that the event would have proved prosperous; and thought to have surprised you, and charmed Lydia, with my unexpected good fortune. But oh, what a cruel reverse have I now to experience!

Fab. A reverse that the daily experience of thousands might have warned you to avoid, rather than to build your hopes on such a sandy foundation. The tide of eastern riches flowing in upon us, which might have scattered plenty over our country

try, such adventurers as you, Mr. Beverley, have rendered the parent of poverty, and the means of almost general bankruptcy. A simple individual to rise to day worth half a million—an undone man to morrow! Are these the principles of commerce? Were these the lessons which your worthy father transmitted to you? or which I have inculcated?

Bev. Have mercy, Mr. Fable; consider my situation, and do not seek to aggravate the horrors of it—I who so lately thought myself in the road to prosperity, hoping to retrieve my fortune, and redeem my character, now shortly to be branded as the most faithless of beings, the basest of mankind! Distraction!

Fab. Your situation, I own is dreadful; but by what an unpardonable complication of depravity have you brought it upon yourself, Mr. Beverley! Not content with one species of enormity, but industriously multiplying your ruin, and combining in yourself the double vices of a man of business, and a man of pleasure! Gambling the whole morning in the Alley, and sitting down at night to *quinze* and hazard at St. James's; by turns, making yourself a prey to the rooks and sharks at the other! Formerly a young spendthrift was contented with one species of prodigality—but it was reserved for you and your precious asso-

ciates to compound this new medley of folly, this olio of vice and extravagance, at once including the dissoluteness of an abandoned debauchee, the chicanery of a petty fogger, and the dirty tricking of a fraudulent stock-jobbing broker.

Bev. Go on; go on, Sir! it is less than I merit, and I can endure it with patience. My late humiliation was but the prologue to my total ruin. The most desperate calamity cannot now make me more miserable.

Fab. Oh, Beverley! did you but know the consolation I had in store for you, the schemes I had formed to make you easy in your circumstances, and happy in your love, you would still more regret this cruel disappointment.

Bev. Happy in my love!—Oh Lydia, I dare not even think of my presumption in having aspired to your favour!

Fab. Go young man! go to those friends on whom you formerly placed such reliance, and try what they will contribute to deliver you from ruin!—Leave me a while—studying to exert my weak endeavours to preserve my friend—or, if they fail, struggling to arm my mind with fortitude and patience.

Bev. Where shall I direct myself? to whom shall I apply? My situation I fear is hopeless. The inhabitant of a dungeon,
under

under sentence of execution, is in a state of happiness, to what I feel at this moment.

[*Exit.*

F A B L E *alone.*

Though he appears at this instant so very culpable, I cannot but be touched by his agitation and remorse.— Yet this is not a moment for passion, but reflection.— The ruin if not prevented, so thoroughly overwhelming! The time so pressing! My friend absent! The property I can command, large and considerable as it is, not to be converted into specie directly!— What can be done? — Mr. Tropick must return me the money in his hands which I must now prevent his delivering, as well as the supposed letters to Beverley— yet that will be far, very far from sufficient— how to make up the rest then!— There is one way indeed— but is that warrantable? Lydia's trust money.— Have I a right, on any pretence whatever, to lay my hands but for a moment, on that sacred deposit?— And yet, where would be the injury? I am sure of replacing the sum before there is the least probability of its being demanded: and that resource, in conjunction with others already in my power, would supply every emergency. My absent friend would be rescued from certain ruin, even the transgression of Beverley might be concealed from the world,

and Lydia would suffer no wrong, nor even be alarmed by suspicion.—It shall be so. I'll see this broker and settle the matter immediately.—And yet, my heart recoils at this transaction. The most pious frauds are at least ambiguous; and I feel it as the most cruel necessity to be driven to indirect means, even for the most generous purposes.—But I have entangled myself by one crooked action, and I must endeavour to redeem all by another. [*Exit.*]

ANOTHER APARTMENT IN THE
SAME HOUSE.

Enter HANDY *and* Mrs. FLOUNCE.

Handy. Oh! if this is the case, I shall give warning immediately.

Mrs. Flounce. So shall I, I promise them. Ruined indeed! in my mind it is a monstrous piece of impudence in these trumpery merchant-people to keep gentlefolks for their servants, like people of quality.—Mrs. Golding quotha'!—a gentlewoman of my genteel family—as wealthy a rope-maker's daughter as any in the city of Bristol! equal to Mrs. Golding, I hope, at any time.

Handy. Equal, Mrs. Flounce! ay, and a great deal superiour. An old worn-out bit of beggar's-tape, that binds the hem of quality!—imitating countesses and duchesses—endeavouring to adapt her
vulgar

vulgar west-country airs to the meridian of St. James's—aping in her Bristol manner, the airs and graces of persons of fashion—but no more like persons of fashion, than a Bristol stone is to a diamond!

Mrs. Flounce. Well! service, as they say, is no inheritance, Mr. Handy—so I shan't go into place again—not I, truly—I have taken a house at Hogsdon, and intend to set up a boarding-school to teach young ladies breeding.

Handy. And you'll have great success, I dare say, Mrs. Flounce.—As to me, my master was to have got me a good place in the India-House; or to have sent me out with the next cargo of judges and generals to Bengal.—But now he's ruined in the Alley, his interest I suppose is all gone—as well as his principal—eh, Mrs. Flounce! But this is always the case, when Lombard Street will travel to Pall Mall. Quite another latitude! Is it not, Mrs. Flounce?—But odso! here's somebody coming up stairs—we'll settle this matter in the house-keeper's room. Your hand, my dear!

Mrs. Flounce. And my heart too, Mr. Handy! but I shall pick a quarrel with my lady, and give warning as soon as she comes home.

Handy. To be sure, Mrs. Flounce! There's nothing more to be got in this house. We'll both give warning imme-

diately; and we'll give up the month's wages to the poor devils out of mere charity. *[Exeunt.]*

Enter a Servant followed by GOLDING.

Gold. Mr. Fable not at home, d'ye say?

Serv. But just gone out, Sir.

Gold. Nor Mr. Beverley?

Serv. No, Sir.

Gold. Nor Mrs. Golding neither?

Serv. My lady has been abroad with two other ladies most part of the morning, but we expect her home very soon, Sir.

Gold. Well—well—as soon as any of them return, let me know.

Serv. I will, Sir. *[Exit.]*

GOLDING *alone.*

Very strange all this! I don't understand one word I have heard or read of my friends, or myself, or my affairs since I landed. Thou art in a maze, friend Golding! But a man who comes home from the Indies, must expect at his return to meet with some new events to surprise him—his house burnt, his daughter eloped, his son engaged in a fray, his wife dead, or some little accident. The principal object of my voyage too has not yet answered, though in other points it has amply succeeded. I long to see Mr. Fable, or Beverley, or my wife—Who have we here?

Enter

Enter TROPICK.

What is your pleasure, Sir?

Trop. To speak with Mr. Beverley. But he is not at home, they say.

Gold. So it seems, Sir.

Trop. Having some very particular business with him, I must beg leave to wait for his return.

Gold. I am concerned in Mr. Beverley's affairs. Pray, Sir, what is your business? You may trust it to me, Sir.

Trop. I have letters of great consequence from abroad to deliver to him, and some more for Mr. Fable.

Gold. From abroad! from what part of the world? and from whom, Sir?

Trop. From India—from my old friend and acquaintance Mr. Golding.

Gold. Mr. Golding!—So here's an old friend and acquaintance of mine that I never saw in my life before. [*aside.*]—And pray how is Mr. Golding, Sir?

Trop. Never better, Sir.

Gold. Where is he at present, Sir?

Trop. In India, Sir.

Gold. What part of India?

Trop. Bengal.

Gold. I don't know that ever I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Golding. Pray what sort of a man is he?

Trop. As good a sort of man as breathes, Sir.

Gold.

Gold. Yes; but his person!

Trop. Oh, as to his person, that is indifferent enough—a little, wizen, withered, whipper-snapper old gentleman, shorter by the head and shoulders than you or I, Sir.—A little merry man though—many a curry have I eat in his company—many a fagar have little Goldy and I smoaked together.

Gold. What you and little Goldy are particular friends then?

Trop. Very particular; or he hardly would have entrusted me with my present commission, I believe.

Gold. What may that commission be, Sir?

Trop. Nay, I may tell you: and indeed the affair will soon be known by every body.—I am not only commissioned to deliver the letters I mentioned, but charged with a very capital remittance from my friend Golding, consigned to Mr. Fable, in favour of the young gentleman here, Mr. Beverley, for whom I now came to enquire.

Gold. And have you this capital remittance with you at present, Sir?

Trop. Yes, yes; I have my credentials. Here they are! [*clapping his hand to his pocket*] safe and sound, I warrant you—and as good as the Bank, Sir.

Gold. And you had this money directly from Mr. Golding, you say?

Trop.

Trop. From his own hands—from whom else should I have it?

Gold. Nay, how should I know! But it is very well as it is—very well. Be so good then, if you please, Sir, to deliver this very capital sum of money to me, Sir!

Trop. To you? on what account, friend!

Gold. Because, as you say, you had it from me.

Trop. Why, who are you?

Gold. The very person from whose own hands, you confess you received it—Mr. Golding.

Trop. You, Mr. Golding!

Gold. The same.

Trop. No, no—not you, indeed—that will never pass, I promise you.

Gold. Not Mr. Golding!—Why, who the devil am I then?

Trop. A damn'd rogue, I believe. Just now you said, you did not know Mr. Golding; and as soon as you heard I had brought a considerable sum of money, you are turned into Mr. Golding yourself.—But you may cast your skin again, old serpent. The trick won't take, I assure you.

Gold. Trick!—This is the most impudent piece of knavery!—Trick, indeed! I believe, there is some trick upon me here, if I knew what to make of it—I'll have you taken up for a new kind of forgery; for bringing money upon false pretences—for—

Trop.

Trop. And you insist upon it that you are Mr. Golding?

Gold. To be sure, I do. I'll call the whole house to prove the truth of it.

Trop. And Mr. Golding, the true Mr. Golding, is really returned from India then?

Gold. To be sure he is. Can't you see, Sir?

Trop. I have made a fool of myself a second time—that's what I see—but be who you will, Mr. Golding, or not Mr. Golding, I shall not deliver the letters or money to you, old gentleman!—I'll go back again like a fool as I came, to the old fool that sent me—on such a fool's errand. [Exit.

GOLDING *alone.*

What the plague! Am I in India still then? or in the moon? and myself and the people about me all lunatics?—Our affairs, they say are all in confusion, and yet Beverley is going to be married.—To whom I wonder!—No matter who—the match I intended will be quite out of the question.—Another piece of ill fortune!—But I am in the dark all this while—talking of every thing, and acquainted with nothing.—Well! since I can find nobody, and get no intelligence at home, I will seek for it abroad—by delivering my letters, and making

making enquiries at Mr. Denier's—[going]
 But stay! here's a woman at last. My wife,
 I hope.—Hey! how's this? Do I see right?
 Mrs. Carlton!

Enter Mrs. CARLTON.

Of all the women on earth, Mrs. Carlton!

Mrs. Carlt. Mercy on me! What do I
 see? Can that be Mr. Winterton?

Gold. No.

Mrs. Carlt. Yes. It is he—

Gold. No, no, no, I tell you!

Mrs. Carlt. What! shan't I believe my
 senses? Are not you Mr. Winterton?

Gold. Hush!—I am glad to see you—
 You know me well enough—but don't call
 me by that name again for the life of you!

Mrs. Carlt. Why your name is Winter-
 ton—isn't it Sir?

Gold. Hift! Don't bawl so—Come away
 from that door a little—and not a breath
 of that name, I charge you.

Mrs. Carlt. Lord, Lord; what's the mat-
 ter with you?—What's the man so much
 afraid of?

Gold. What most men are afraid of.—
 My wife.

Mrs. Carlt. Your wife!

Gold. Ay; Mrs. Golding. Now you are
 satisfied.

Mrs. Carlt. What! and are you Mr.
 Golding then after all, Sir?

Gold.

Gold. I believe so. I was Mr. Golding before I went abroad—but I scarce know who I am, or what I am, or where I am, since I came back again.

Mrs. Carlt. So this was the reason then that we, poor souls, could never discover what was become of you, Mr. Winterton—Mr. Golding, I beg your pardon, Sir. But you need not be so terrified—for I left Mrs. Golding on a morning visit, and she is not come in yet.

Gold. In the mean while, let us make the best use of our time then—Where is my daughter? where is Lydia?

Mrs. Carlt. I left her with Mrs. Golding. You'll see them both here presently.

Gold. That's well—but we must be cautious—How does she do?

Mrs. Carlt. As well as can be expected in her situation.

Gold. As well as can be expected!—What do you mean?—Her situation!—Not undone, I hope.

Mrs. Carlt. Only over head and ears in love, Sir.

Gold. In love! with whom?

Mrs. Carlt. With the young gentleman of this house—Mr. Beverley.

Gold. Beverley!—Why he is going to be married.

Mrs. Carlt. So they say, Sir.

Gold. But to whom? do you know?

Mrs.

Mrs. Carlt. To her, Sir.

Gold. To Lydia?

Mrs. Carlt. Yes to be sure, Sir. Heaven forbid it should have been any body else.—But his affairs are all in confusion, it seems, and there's such a pother between them, that I am half-distracted about it.

Gold. And I am quite distracted—distracted with joy, Mrs. Carlton! Heaven be praised!—Come, come; here is one piece of good fortune however!—Leave young folks to themselves, I say—What I have been labouring and studying to bring about, have they settled at once. The very thing I could have wished! Half the purpose of my voyage to India, and the meaning of the money lately remitted, for which Mr. Fable is appointed trustee.

Mrs. Carlt. And does Mr. Fable know any thing of her relation to you, Sir?

Gold. Not a syllable—heaven be praised, not a syllable!—I was not willing to explain the matter, till I saw more likelihood of my scheme's taking place.—And now from what I can judge of his proceedings, it is lucky that I never trusted him. An old fox! a caterpillar! a viper! Beverley's sole trustee, and creditor indeed!—a crocodile!

Mrs. Carlt. But was it not a little cruel in you to keep us so long in the dark, Mr. Golding?

Gold.

Gold. Nay I have not been so much to blame neither Mrs. Carlton. My first marriage with Lydia's mother when I was an idle young fellow, was a foolish love business—and I knew that my having a daughter abroad would have been an objection to my present wife's relations—so I fairly kept the whole matter a secret.—Lydia's mother dying in child birth, and my present marriage having taken place, during the infancy of Lydia, I directed her to be educated by another name, under which I once visited you and my daughter in India—that's the whole affair!—But not a word more of the name or the business, I charge you!

Mrs. Carlt. Not for the world, Sir, till you think proper to mention it.

Mrs. Gold. [*behind*] Desire Miss Lydia to see the things taken out of the coach, and then to follow me into the drawing room!

Mrs. Carlt. Ha! the ladies are here—here already I protest, Sir.

Gold. Yes I hear my wife's voice. I would not have her surprize us together. I might appear somewhat awkward and confused, perhaps. I'll run and give her the meeting—but remember now, not a wry word for your life! Mum, mum, Mrs. Carlton!

[*Exit.*

Mrs.

Mrs. CARLTON alone.

You may depend upon me, Sir.—Ah Mr. Golding, Mr. Golding! There is no trusting to looks, I find. Who would have thought of your passing by a wrong name? Who would have suspected such a grave, demure-looking gentleman?

Enter Mr. and Mrs. GOLDING.

Mrs. Gold. My dear love! I am transported to see you.—This is the most agreeable surprize—I thought the last ships that came in would have brought me nothing but letters—or, perhaps, a pagoda, or a monkey at best. But my husband!—my dear love!—Oh my dear, let me introduce a very agreeable, genteel young lady to you!—a young lady of fortune and family—I assure you.—My husband, my dear child! [*introducing Lydia*] My dear, Miss Lydia Winterton!

Lyd. Ha! my father! Mr. Winterton! [*faints away*].

Mrs. Gold. She faints away—take care of the child!

Maids enter and run to assist LYDIA.

Lord! what's the meaning of this?—She cried out, father! and called you Mr. Winterton.

Gold. Yes—she did say something about Betterton.

Mrs. Carlt. Ay, the poor child has very weak spirits.—Every little thing flutters her.—And Mr. Golding is a little like her papa too, I think—especially about the nose.

Gold. Ay; may be so—may be so—but, my dear, suppose you take her into your chamber, and let her lie down a little to recover her spirits!

Mrs. Gold. Ay; we'll soon bring her to herself again—this way, Molly—keep the eau de luce to her nose?—This is from riding backwards in the coach, I fancy—this way, gently, Molly! gently.

[*Mrs. Gold. and Maids lead out Lydia.*]

Manent Mrs. CARLTON and GOLDING.

Gold. So, so! Here was an escape! Murder will out.

Mrs. Carlt. Never fear, never fear, Sir! I'll go in to Lydia directly—let no body be about her but myself—and as soon as she recovers, I'll teach her lesson and give her the right cue, I warrant you.

Gold. Ay, do so, do so, Mrs. Carlton! Take care, I beseech you! For the sake of peace and quietness keep this matter a secret! I shall never be able to break it to Mrs. Golding—she would think herself injured, cheated, robbed, and undone.—

And

And if she were once to know Lydia was a daughter of mine, she would ring it in my ears as long as I live—a smoaky house, and a scolding wife, you know!—I need say no more—It is a kind of hell to inhabit one, and the devil himself would scarce live with the other.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

AN APARTMENT IN DENIER'S
HOUSE.*DENIER and CAPIAS.*

Den. **V**ERY well, very well!—And you have him safe then, Mr. Capias?

Cap. Safe and secure, I warrant you, Sir. I put the writ into sure hands—those that will touch a man let him be ever so shy—however, they had not much ado in this instance.—They planted themselves at the corner, stopt Mr. Golding near his own door, and told him their business: he went with them at once, and is now lodged with my friend Snap in Shire Lane.

Den. This comes from early intelligence. No minister, no general, no broker could turn it to greater advantage.

Cap. But how did you procure it, Sir? You are the first upon the roll—I searched the sheriff's office, and there is nothing else out against Mr. Golding, or any body connected with him.

Den. Beverley, knowing me to be his friend, came to acquaint me with his
distresses

distresses in the Alley. The natural consequences of that adventure are obvious: and all my India concerns, remittances, and money transactions coming through their house, it struck me with a panick; but by good luck, he was scarce gone before I had notice of Mr. Golding's return by letters from India, brought by the same ships in which he came over. I did not lose a moment. I dare say he had not once entered his doors when the officers met him, and perhaps Beverley himself is not yet apprised of his arrival. Am not I a man of dispatch, Mr. Capias?

Cap. A Cæsar, a Machiavel, Sir! You know all the turnings and windings and narrow back stairs of the law too. You feel your own way; and are client, counsel, and attorney, all in one, Sir!

Den. And have you the deed ready, Capias?

Cap. Here it is, Sir, perused, signed, and settled by old Steady, of Lincoln's-Inn—an excellent workman—and if we can prevail on Mr. Golding to execute it, you'll come in for an exclusive lien upon his effects, instead of compounding with the other creditors under a commission of bankruptcy, which I suppose will be taken out in less than these three days.

Den. Ay—and under which they will not pay five shillings in the pound, per-

L 3 haps—

haps—such a tumble!—sign the deed! tell him he must sign it—His mind's unsettled yet, and he'll be easily persuaded—Besides, he'll be glad to serve a particular friend—It can't affect him, you know—the assignees will divide the remainder.—I have been a constant friend to the house—he'll be glad to return the obligation, and I shall fall upon my legs again.

Cap. Let us lose no time, the sooner he executes the better, Sir!

Den. Come along then! I'll attend you to Mr. Snap's. I have not seen Mr. Golding since his return, and we should visit our friends in their affliction, you know—come along Mr. Capias! [*Exeunt.*]

Scene changes to a room in SNAP'S house.

FABLE and SNAP.

Fab. Every thing much to my satisfaction; nothing here to complain of, I assure you, Mr. Snap. I never was more comfortably lodged in my life, never wish for better attendance, or more convenient accommodation.

Snap. We does all in our power to oblige company, Sir.—No body can do no more, you know—especially such as behaves like gentlemen, like your honour, Sir—for we has them of all sorts.—Within this fortnight, there has been no less than four or five

five different lodgers in this very apartment.—The room is genteel enough for that matter.—Let me see, who was they? —An ensign in the guards; a poet-man from Little-Britain; a Scotch actorman; an old battered lady from Soho; and a very fine young one from the New Buildings at Marybone—that's five—and now we have the honour of your honour to make up the even half-dozen, Sir.

Fab. I hope not to give you much trouble, Mr. Snap.

Snap. No, no; you knows you'll soon be relieved I dare say, your honour.

Fab. Were my letters all delivered according to the directions?

Snap. Every one, Sir; and the gentlefolks says they will be here presently.—I thinks I hears somebody at the door now.—Shall I shew them up, Sir?

Fab. If you please, Mr. Snap.

Snap. Perhaps, they chuses some refreshment.—I've some fine dry sherry—very good for a whet in the morning,

Enter TROPICK.

Fab. Ha! my friend, I am happy to see you.—Mr. Snap, good morning to you.

Snap. Gentlemen, your servant.—Shall I send up a bottle of white wine, or a bowl of punch, Sir?

Fab. Not at present, I thank you, Mr. Snap.—If any body else enquires for Mr. Golding, be so good as to shew them up.

Snap. I will, Sir.—Your servant—Gentlemen, your servant. [Exit.

Manent FABLE and TROPICK.

Fab. This is kind, my friend. You little thought of my desiring a visit from you at this house, I believe.

Trop. Look ye, Fable, I don't know what to make of all this.—I don't understand you.—You may be an honest man, perhaps.—I hope you are an honest man; but you look very much like a rogue at present, I can tell you.—First of all, you employ me in a damned ridiculous business, in which I have made a cursed fool of myself—and that is scarce over, than in comes a note from you at a sponging-house, desiring me to come there, but not to ask for you by your own name. What's the meaning of all this, master Fable?

Fab. No harm, I assure you, friend. In regard to the business you mention, I meant to stop your going, if, unluckily, it had not been too late; and, as to your not asking for me here by my own name, I desired it, because I am not here in my own right, but as the representative of another person.

Trop.

Trop. Another person! I understand you less and less. Why, zouns, man, they can't arrest people by proxy.

Fab. No; but they may by mistake; and I have humoured the mistake, in order to serve the real party, and punish the rascally creditor.

Trop. Who is the real party? and who is the creditor?

Fab. The writ was sued out against Mr. Golding, at the suit of Mr. Denier. I had but just settled some affairs very essential to Mr. Golding's interest; and did not know of his return till the moment I had placed him beyond danger. Coming home, however, in the dusk of the evening, the catchpoles lay in wait near the house, touched me on the shoulder, and presented their authority. I readily obeyed, submitting to an arrest in the character of Mr. Golding, and glad of an opportunity of exposing the false professions of a pretended friend to the family.

Trop. Well, this seems right enough;—and yet, somehow, I don't like it neither.—I don't love turning and doubling.—I love to go strait forwards, Mr. Fable.

Fab. The best road will wind sometimes, you know. Have a little patience; we shall soon be at the end of our journey.

Enter

Enter SNAP.

Snap. More company, Sir.—Walk up, gentlemen; walk up, ladies. The stairs is a little dark; but there's no danger.

Enter GOLDING, Mrs. GOLDING, Mrs. CARLTON, LYDIA and BEVERLEY.

[Exit Snap.]

Fab. Mr. Golding, I am happy to see you returned.—Ladies, you're welcome.—Beverley, how do you?—Well, Mr. Golding, how do you like my new apartments?

Gold. Like?—I like nothing I have seen or heard of you since my coming from the Indies. Out of doors, I hear, you have almost made me a bankrupt.—At home, I find, you have made me a fool.

Fab. How so, Mr. Golding?

Gold. Have not you made yourself this young gentleman's sole trustee and creditor?

Fab. He has made me so, I confess.

Gold. And did not you persuade him to it by a Canterbury tale of letters from me, losses in India, and the devil knows what, when you had no more authority to talk of me, than of the pope or the great mogul? Had you any such letters from me? Answer me that, Sir.

Fab. No, I had not.

Gold.

Gold. I told you so.— And did you ever hear that I had any losses in India?

Fab. Never.

Gold. There again!— Did not I tell you so!— And what the plague did you mean by all those falsehoods and forgeries? Eh, Mr. Fable?

Fab. To serve you, and maintain the credit of the house.

Gold. And a very creditable way our affairs are in, truly! One moment I learn that you are our sole creditor; and the next moment I find that our sole creditor is so much in debt himself, that he is lodged in a sponging-house.

Fab. Very true; even so, Sir.

Trop. P'ha! plague of your cool blood! I can't bear it. Why does not the man speak out, and tell the whole story?— Look ye, Mr. Golding; he is a very honest fellow; and all he has done was entirely for your service.

Gold. Oh ho, Sir! Are you there, old Smoke-a-pipe? What, my old friend, that eat curries and smoked sagars with me at Bengal!— are you come again?— Where's the money I sent by you?

Trop. There, old Fable; you see what a pretty figure I have made.

Fab. Mr. Golding will soon know you better, and entertain a proper respect for you.

Gold.

Gold. I am finely entertained by you both. You speak for him, and he vouches for you—and I don't know what to make of either of you. But, to come to a right understanding, be so good as to tell me, Mr. Fable, whether you did not receive a very large remittance from India, in favour of this young lady?

Fab. I did.

Gold. Very well.—You must know then, Sir, that her friends have appointed me joint-trustee, with a power to pay the whole sum into her own hands immediately. She has a present occasion for it, and desires to receive it directly.

Lyd. I do, I do, Sir, in order to apply it for the relief of Mr. Beverley.

Bev. Generous, too generous Lydia! Ruin should not prevail on me to touch a single doit of it.

Gold. Please to let us touch it, however, Mr. Fable.

Fab. Impossible.

Gold. Impossible! How so? You received it safe—did not you?

Fab. I do not deny it.

Gold. Where is it then?

Fab. Not in my hands at present; nor can I advance any part of it within this fortnight or three weeks.

Gold. Three weeks!—We can't stay three days, or three hours, Sir.

Bev.

Bev. My Lydia defrauded too!—Confusion!

Mrs. Carl. The child's money gone!

Trop. What the plague! Can't you produce the money, Fable?

Fab. I cannot, indeed, friend.

Trop. Friend! Don't call me your friend—I am not your friend—never will be your friend—never speak to you as long as I live.

Bev. Are these your lessons of morality, Mr. Fable? Have you reproached me for intemperate indulgence of my passions, while you were yourself practising deliberate villainy?

Gold. Ah! he has embezzled the money, as sure as I live—Who's here, Mr. Denier!—Your servant, Sir!—

Enter DENIER and CAPIAS.

Den. Your's, Sir. I am sorry, Mr. Golding, to have been reduced to the necessity of taking so disagreeable a step as this may appear to you.

Gold. Disagreeable? not in the least disagreeable; I take it rather kind of you, and I am very glad to see you.

Den. I am happy to find you consider the matter so fairly. I had rather have avoided it; but being advised that it would essentially promote my interest, and not affect your own, I hope you will excuse it,
and

and indeed rejoice at an opportunity of giving a preference to a friend, instead of involving him with your common acquaintance.

Gold. Hey-day! What now? Have I lost my senses, or every body about me lost theirs? I don't understand a word you say, what you mean, or what you drive at.

Cap. My client refers to the bill of Middlesex, taken out against you, and served on you yesterday evening, under which you were arrested, and are now in Mr. Snap's custody.

Gold. I arrested!—Where is Mr. Snap? Here, house!

Enter SNAP.

Snap. Did your honour call, Sir?

Gold. Pray Mr. Snap, did you arrest me last night?—Did you serve any writ upon me, Mr. Snap?

Snap. Not I, Sir!—not upon your honour—I arrested Mr. Golding.

Gold. Mr. Golding!—So it seems I am not come to myself again yet then!—You, Mr. Sagar, did you help to serve the writ, friend? [*to Tropick.*]

Den. 'Sdeath, Mr. Capias, there seems to be some mistake here.

Cap. Truly there doth appear to have been a wrongful arrest.

Snap.

Snap. Not at all, Sir.—I knows Mr. Golding well enough.—There he stands! [*pointing to Fable*] I shewed him the writ, and he came along with me at once. Did not you, Sir?

Fab. I did.—I submitted to go with you, thinking it might be of service to my friend, and a punishment to his false-hearted creditor.

Trop. This action looks honestly of old Fable, after all—and yet the money—I don't know what to make of him.

Gold. Nor I neither.

Bev. But Denier's treachery! I could not have believed it!

Gold. No to be sure! but you shall hear of it, Sir, [*to Denier*] and to your cost too, I promise you! I'll sue you for damages, and Mr. Fable shall bring his action for false imprisonment—we'll punish you.

Den. Indeed! it is time to look about me then—But you had best have let the business sleep—I have my revenge in my own hands, I assure you—I have a little packet here—

Gold. Well! what of that, Sir?

Den. Nay, nothing—only a little news from Bengal.

Gold. Eh!

Den. Very interesting to a certain lady, not a hundred miles from this place at present.

[*Looking at Mrs. Golding.*
Mrs.

Mrs. Gold. How! what's this?

Fab. What does he drive at?

Gold. I wish he'd be quiet.

Den. When you have perused this letter, Mrs. Golding—

Mrs. Gold. Well, Sir!

Den. You will find, Madam—

Gold. Don't believe a word he says!

Mrs. Gold. You won't let me hear what he says.

Den. Poor gentleman! his fears overcome him. But I'll put him out of his pain in an instant. This letter, Madam, arrived it seems by the same ships with Mr. Golding, and will inform you, Madam, that this grave old gentleman has had a connexion in India with another lady—

Mrs. Gold. My husband!

Gold. [*aside.*] Oh plague! I'm betray'd, blown, and undone!

Den. That this young lady is no other than his daughter—

Mrs. Gold. Lydia!

Den. That my correspondent in India, who is his friend, consigned her to my family, knowing our connection and acquaintance with your own—and that Mr. Golding himself forwarded the late remittance in her favour, meaning to give a colour to an intention he had formed of marrying Miss Lydia to Beverley—All these circumstances my correspondent refers to,

as

as things of course in his letter, thinking that Mr. Golding had no objection to my being acquainted with them. Read, read, Madam! [*Gives the Letter.*]

Gold. [*aside*] Dead and buried! I wish I was at Bengal now, or in the black hole at Calcutta!

Fab. And so this last confidence, like every other, you have betrayed, Sir. Is this your vindication?

Den. No, but my revenge, Sir, extorted from me by great provocation—Before you open an account against me, see that you are able to answer all my demands upon you. Take care of the main chance—As to your action at law, my friend Capias here knows I may despise it. If the officer has made a false arrest, let the officer answer it.—I have no concern but to take care of myself you know; so come along Mr. Capias!

Cap. I attend you, Sir.

[*Ex. Denier and Capias.*]

Bev. Fool that I have been! false as my other friends appeared, I still reposed an entire confidence in his fidelity.

Fab. Sordid, execrable, narrow-minded rascal!

Mrs. Gold. Here's baseness and treachery! [*after reading the letter.*] Was ever any

thing so scandalous! Concealed children, intrigues in India, and ladies in a corner!

Bev. Well, but Mrs. Golding—

Mrs. Gold. When he is at home with his family, he is as grave, and dry, and sober as a judge, forsooth! and yet when he gets abroad he can be as gay, and as prodigal, as a young nobleman just come to his title and estate.

Fab. He may have been to blame, Madam: but—

Mrs. Gold. To blame, Mr. Fable! What! these were his India voyages then! this was his business at Bengal! these were his large remittances truly! squandering his fortune, and what was my right, Mr. Fable, upon kept madams, Eastern princeesses, black-amoor harlots, and natural children!

Mrs. Carlt. Nay—don't say that, Mrs. Golding! Miss Lydia was born in lawful wedlock, I assure you, Madam.

Mrs. Gold. What! has he got two wives then?

Mrs. Carlt. No—dear me, Madam—Miss Lydia's mother was dead and buried before his marriage with you, Madam.

Bev. My Lydia's uneasiness is insupportable. Shock her no further I beseech you, Madam!

Mrs.

Mrs. Gold. Do you think I have been well treated, Sir?

Bev. The story is but new to me, Madam; but the main particular is Mr. Golding's first marriage, which, I apprehend, has been kept secret merely from the notion of its being disagreeable to your family.

Mrs. Gold. And is this the case, Sir?

Gold. It is indeed—no further harm, I assure you—I should have mentioned the affair to be sure—but—

Enter SNAP.

Snap. Here's one muster Check below axes for one muster Fable.

Fab. Oh, desire him to walk up, Sir;—Now set your heart at rest about my conduct, friend.

Trop. You must make all matters clear then: for at present I don't half understand you.

Fab. Here comes an interpreter.

Enter CHECK.

Well Check, have you settled the business?

Check. I have, Sir. Mr. Beverley's differences are all paid. I have acquittances

from the parties, and the whole account is closed, Sir.

Bev. Amazement!

Gold. What is the money gone that way then? None of it embezzled! Eh, Check!

Check. Embezzled? Heaven bless your honour! he has made free to borrow the money left in his hands indeed: but then he has applied all that he could command of his own into the bargain. Embezzled indeed! No, no, Mr. Fable cheats nobody but himself, Sir.

Fab. Every particular, Mr. Golding, I am ready to explain. I shall say nothing in vindication or apology for my conduct. The motives on which I have acted are obvious.

Trop. So they are—so they are friend! —Give me your hand, old Fable! give me your hand! I see you are an honest fellow at last, and I am not ashamed to acknowledge you.

Gold. And I am much obliged to you! I have enough and more than enough to stand the shock of our affairs, repay you with interest, and establish our credit; for, thank heaven, I have been employing my time abroad better than my young partner has done at home.

Mrs.

Mrs. Gold. Oh you have been very finely employed to be sure!

Fab. Come, come, this should be a day of general happiness; as an instance of your universal good opinion of me, let me have influence enough to make peace between Mr. and Mrs. Golding; and as an earnest of their reconciliation, let them give their joint consent to unite Lydia and Beverley, and ratify their happiness!

Bev. Mrs. Golding!—Sir!

Mrs. Gold. What says her fine papa to it?

Gold. Why, if Lydia—

Mrs. Carl. Heaven bless her, she doats on him.

Lyd. Yes, I will own, my dear father, that the change in Mr. Beverley has removed the only objection that I could ever make to him; and I will not blush to confess that the future happiness of my life depends on him.

Fab. Then every thing is adjusted. I give you joy, my friends.

Trop. And I give you joy too. You have puzzled me confoundedly, I confess—I said you were an honest fellow—I knew you were an honest fellow at bottom—but it was a damned long way to the bottom for all that, old Fable.

Fab. My conduct has been mysterious, I confess, friend—perhaps, in some degree culpably so—but whenever I puzzled you, be assured I no less embarrassed myself. The least deviation from the strait path is attended with difficulties; and though I have always meant honestly, and thought I acted uprightly, I have had ample reason to experience the convenience and necessity, as well as the beauty of truth.

F I N I S.

THE

LAMELOVER,

A COMEDY,

BY SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.

Dramatis Personae.

MEN.

Sir LUKE LIMP, Mr. WOODFORD,
Serjeant CIRCUIT, Mr. FAIRPLAY,
Colonel SECRET, First SERVANT,
JACK, Second SERVANT.

WOMEN.

Mrs. CIRCUIT, Mrs. SIMPER,
CHARLOT, BETTY.

THE
L A M E L O V E R.

Enter Serjeant CIRCUIT *and* CHARLOT.

Charlot. **I** Tell you, Sir, his love to me is all a pretence: it is amazing that you, who are so acute, so quick in discerning on other occasions, should be so blind upon this.

Serj. But where are your proofs, Charlot? What signifies your opening matters which your evidence cannot support?

Charl. Surely, Sir, strong circumstances in every court should have weight.

Serj. So they have collaterally, child, that is by way as it were of corroboration, or where matters are doubtful; then indeed, as Plowden wisely, observes "Les circonstances ajoutent beaucoup de poid aux faits."—You understand me?

Charl. Not perfectly well.

Serj. Then to explain by case in point; A, we will suppose, my dear, robs B of a watch

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watch upon Hounslow heath—dy'e mind, child?

Charl. I do, Sir.

Serj. A, is taken up and indicted; B swears positively to the identity of A.—Dy'e observe?

Charl. Attentively.

Serj. Then what does me A, but sets up the alibi C, to defeat the affidavit of B.—You take me.

Charl. Clearly.

Serj. So far you see then the ballance is even.

Charl. True.

Serj. But then to turn the scale, child, against A, in favour of B, they produce the circumstance D, viz. B's watch found in the pocket of A; upon which the testimony of C being contradicted by B,—no, by D,—why then A, that is to say C,—no D,—joining B, they convict C,—no, no, A,—against the affidavit of C.—So this being pretty clear, child, I leave the application to you.

Charl. Very obliging, Sir. But suppose now, Sir, it should appear that the attention of Sir Luke Limp is directed to some other object, would not that induce you to—

Serj. Other object! Where?

Charl. In this very house.

Serj.

Serj. Here! why the girl is non compos; there's nobody here, child, but a parcel of Abigals.

Charl. No, Sir?

Serj. No.

Charl. Yes, Sir, one person else.

Serj. Who is that?

Charl. But remember, Sir, my accusation is confined to Sir Luke.

Serj. Well, well.

Charl. Suppose then, Sir, those powerful charms which made a conquest of you, may have extended their empire over the heart of Sir Luke?

Serj. Why, huffy, you don't hint at your mother-in-law?

Charl. Indeed, Sir, but I do.

Serj. Ay; why this is point blank treason against my sovereign authority: but can you, Charlot, bring proof of any overt acts?

Charl. Overt acts!

Serj. Ay; that is any declaration by writing, or even word of mouth is sufficient; then let 'em demur if they dare.

Charl. I can't say that, Sir; but another organ has been pretty explicit.

Serj. Which?

Charl. In those cases a very infallible one—the eye.

Serj. Pshaw! nonsense and stuff.—The eye!—The eye has no authority in a court of law.

Charl.

Charl. Perhaps not, Sir; but it is a decisive evidence in a court of love.

Serj. Hark you, Huffy, why you would not file an information against the virtue of Madam your mother; you would not insinuate that she has been guilty of crim. con.?

Charl. Sir, you mistake me; it is not the lady, but the gentleman I am about to impeach.

Serj. Have a care, Charlot! I see on what ground your action is founded—jealousy.

Charl. You were never more deceiv'd in your life; for it is impossible, my dear Sir, that jealousy can subsist without love.

Serj. Well.

Charl. And from that passion, thank heaven, I am pretty free at present.

Serj. Indeed!

Charl. A sweet object to excite tender desires!

Serj. And why not, huffy?

Charl. First as to his years.

Serj. What then?

Charl. I own, Sir, age procures honor, but I believe it is very rarely productive of love.

Serj. Mighty well.

Charl. And tho' the loss of a leg can't be imputed to Sir Luke Limp as a fault—

Serj. How!

Charl.

Charl. I hope, Sir, at least you will allow it a misfortune.

Serj. Indeed!

Charl. A pretty thing truly, for a girl, at my time of life, to be ty'd to a man with one foot in the grave.

Serj. One foot in the grave! the rest of his body is not a whit the nearer for that. — There has been only an execution issued against part of his personals, his real estate is unencumbered and free—besides, you see he does not mind it a whit, but is as alert, and as merry, as a defendant after non-suiting a plaintiff for omitting an S.

Charl. O! Sir! I know how proud Sir Luke is of his leg, and have often heard him declare, that he would not change his bit of timber for the best flesh and bone in the kingdom.

Serj. There's a hero for you!

Charl. To be sure, sustaining unavoidable evils with constancy is a certain sign of greatness of mind.

Serj. Doubtless.

Charl. But then to derive a vanity from a misfortune, will not I'm afraid be admitted as a vast instance of wisdom, and indeed looks as if the man had nothing better to distinguish himself by.

Serj. How does that follow?

Charl. By inunendo.

Serj. Negatur.

Charl.

Charl. Besides, Sir, I have other proofs of your hero's vanity, not inferior to that I have mention'd.

Serj. Cite them.

Charl. The paltry ambition of levying and following titles.

Serj. Titles! I don't understand you?

Charl. I mean the poverty of fastening in public upon men of distinction, for no other reason but because of their rank; adhering to Sir John till the Baronet is superceded by my Lord; quitting the puny Peer for an Earl; and sacrificing all three to a Duke.

Serj. Keeping good company! a laudable ambition!

Charl. True, Sir, if the virtues that procur'd the father a peerage, could with that be entail'd on the son.

Serj. Have a care, huffy—there are severe laws against speaking evil of dignities.—

Charl. Sir!

Serj. Scandalum magnatum is a statute must not be trifled with: why you are not one of those vulgar fluts that think a man the worse for being a Lord?

Charl. No, Sir; I am contented with only, not thinking him the better.

Serj. For all this, I believe, huffy, a right honourable propofal would soon make you alter your mind.

Charl.

Charl. Not unless the proposer had other qualities than what he possesses by patent. Besides, Sir, you know Sir Luke is a devotee to the bottle.

Serj. Not a whit the less honest for that.

Charl. It occasions one evil at least; that when under its influence, he generally reveals all, sometimes more than he knows.

Serj. Proofs of an open temper, you baggage: but, come, come, all these are but trifling objections.

Charl. You mean, Sir, they prove the object a trifle.

Serj. Why you pert jade, do you play on my words? I say Sir Luke is—

Charl. Nobody.

Serj. Nobody! how the deuce do you make that out?—He is neither person attained or outlaw'd, may in any of his majesty's courts sue or be sued, appear by attorney, or in propria persona, can acquire, buy, procure, purchase, possess, and inherit, not only personalities, such as goods, and chattels, but even realities, as all lands, tenements, and hereditaments, whatsoever, and wheresoever.

Charl. But, Sir—

Serj. Nay, further child, he may sell, give, bestow, bequeath, devise, demise, lease, or to farm lett, ditto lands, to any person whomsoever—and—

Charl.

Charl. Without doubt, Sir; but there are notwithstanding in this town a great number of nobodies, not described by lord Coke.

Serj. Hey!

Charl. There is your next-door neighbour, Sir Harry Hen, an absolute blank.

Serj. How so, Mrs. Pert?

Charl. What, Sir! a man who is not suffer'd to hear, see, smell, or in short to enjoy the free use of any one of his senses; who, instead of having a positive will of his own, is deny'd even a paltry negative; who can neither resolve or reply, consent or deny, without first obtaining the leave of his lady: an absolute monarch to sink into the sneaking state of being a slave to one of his subjects—Oh fye!

Serj. Why, to be sure, Sir Harry Hen, is as I may say—

Charl. Nobody Sir, in the fullest sense of the word—Then your client Lord Solo.

Serj. Heyday!—Why you would not annihilate a peer of the realm, with a prodigious estate and an allow'd judge too of the elegant arts.

Charl. O yes, Sir, I am no stranger to that nobleman's attributes; but then, Sir, please to consider, his power as a peer he gives up to a proxy; the direction of his estate, to a rapacious, artful attorney: and as to his skill in the elegant arts, I presume
you

you confine them to painting and music, he is directed in the first by Mynheer Van Eisel, a Dutch dauber; and in the last is but the echo of Signora Florenza, his lordship's mistress and an opera singer.

Serj. Mercy upon us! at what a rate the jade runs!

Charl. In short, Sir, I define every individual who, ceasing to act for himself, becomes the tool, the mere engine of another man's will, to be nothing more than a cypher.

Serj. At this rate the jade will half unpeople the world: but what is all this to Sir Luke? to him, not one of your cases apply.

Charl. Every one—Sir Luke has not a first principle in his whole composition; not only his pleasures, but even his passions are prompted by others; and he is as much directed to the objects of his love and his hatred, as in his eating, drinking, and dressing. Nay, though he is active, and eternally busy, yet his own private affairs are neglected; and he would not scruple to break an appointment that was to determine a considerable part of his property, in order to exchange a couple of hounds for a lord, or to buy a pad-nag for a lady. In a word—but he's at hand, and will explain himself best; I hear his stump on the stairs.

Serj. I hope you will preserve a little decency before your lover at least.

Charl. Lover! ha, ha, ha!

Enter Sir LUKE LIMP.

Sir Luke. Mr. Serjeant, your slave—Ah! are you there my little—O Lord! Miss, let me tell you something for fear of forgetting—Do you know that you are new christen'd, and have had me for a gossip?

Charl. Christen'd! I don't understand you.

Sir Luke. Then lend me your ear—Why last night, as Colonel Kill'em, Sir William Weezy, Lord Frederick Foretop, and I were carelessly fliding the Ranelagh round, picking our teeth, after a damn'd muzzy dinner at Boodle's, who should trip by but an abbess, well known about town, with a smart little nun in her suite. Says Weezy, who, between ourselves, is as husky as hell, Who is that? odds flesh, she's a delicate wench! Zounds! cried Lord Frederick, where can Weezy have been, not to have seen the Harietta before? for you must know Frederick is a bit of Macaroni, and adores the soft Italian termination in *a*.

Charl. He does?

Sir Luke. Yes, a delitanti all over.—Before? replied Weezy; crush me if ever I saw any thing half so handsome before!—No! replied I in an instant; Colonel, what will

will Weezy say when he sees the Charlotta?
—Hey! you little—

Charl. Meaning me, I presume.

Sir Luke. Without doubt; and you have been toasted by that name ever since.

Serj. What a vast fund of spirits he has!

Sir Luke. And why not, my old splitter of causes?

Serj. I was just telling Charlot, that you was not a whit the worse for the loss.

Sir Luke. The worse! much the better, my dear. Consider, I can have neither strain, splint, spavin, or gout; have no fear of corns, kibes, or that another man should kick my shins, or tread on my toes.

Serj. Right.

Sir Luke. What d'ye think I would change with Bill Spindle for one of his drumsticks, or chop with Lord Lumber for both of his logs?

Serj. No!

Sir Luke. No, damn it, I am much better.—Look there—Ha!—What is there I am not able to do? To be sure I am a little awkward at running; but then, to make me amends, I'll hop with any man in town for his sum.

Serj. Ay, and I'll go his halves.

Sir Luke. Then as to your dancing, I am cut out at Madam Cornelly's, I grant, because of the croud; but as far as a private

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Sir Luke. Then as to your dancing, I am cut out at Madam Cornelly's, I grant, because of the croud; but as far as a private

set of six couple, or moving a chair-minuet, match me who can.

Charl. A chair-minuet! I don't understand you.

Sir Luke. Why, child, all grace is confined to the motion of the head, arms, and chest, which may sitting be as fully displayed, as if one had as many legs as a polypus.—As thus—tol de rol—don't you see?

Serj. Very plain.

Sir Luke. A leg! a redundancy! a mere nothing at all. Man is from nature an extravagant creature. In my opinion, we might all be full as well as we are, with but half the things that we have.

Charl. Ay, Sir Luke; how do you prove that?

Sir Luke. By constant experience.—You must have seen the man who makes and uses pens without hands.

Serj. I have.

Sir Luke. And not a twelve-month ago, I lost my way in a fog, at Mile-End, and was conducted to my house in May-Fair by a man as blind as a beetle.

Serj. Wonderful!

Sir Luke. And as to hearing and speaking, those organs are of no manner of use in the world.

Serj. How!

Sir

Sir Luke. If you doubt it, I will introduce you to a whole family, dumb as oysters, and deaf as the dead, who chatter from morning till night by only the help of their fingers.

Serj. Why, Charlot, these are cases in point.

Sir Luke. Oh! clear as a trout-stream; and it is not only, my little Charlot, that this piece of timber answers every purpose, but it has procured me many a bit of fun in my time.

Serj. Ay!

Sir Luke. Why, it was but last summer, at Tunbridge, we were plagued the whole season by a bullet-headed Swiss from the canton of Bern, who was always boasting, what, and how much he dared do; and then, as to pain, no Stoic, not Diogenes, held it more in contempt.—By gods, he was no more minds it dan notings at all—So, foregad, I gave my German a challenge.

Serj. As how!—Mind, Charlot.

Sir Luke. Why to drive a corkin pin into the calves of our legs.

Serj. Well, well.

Sir Luke. Mine, you may imagine, was easily done—but when it came to the Baron—

Serj. Ay, ay.

Sir Luke. Our modern Cato soon lost his coolness and courage, screw'd his nose up to his foretop, rapp'd out a dozen oaths in high Dutch, limp'd away to his lodgings, and was there laid up for a month—Ha, ha, ha!

Enter a Servant, and delivers a Card to Sir LUKE.

Sir Luke. [*reads.*] “Sir Gregory Goose desires the honour of Sir Luke Limp’s company to dine. An answer is desired.” Gadso! a little unlucky; I have been engag’d for these three weeks.

Serj. What, I find Sir Gregory is return’d for the corporation of *Fleesum*.

Sir Luke. Is he so? Oh ho!—That alters the case.—George, give my compliments to Sir Gregory, and I’ll certainly come and dine there. Order Joe to run to alderman Inkle’s, in Threadneedle-street; sorry can’t wait upon him, but confin’d to bed two days with *new influenza*.

Charl. You make light, Sir Luke, of these sort of engagements.

Sir Luke. What can a man do? These damn’d fellows, when one has the misfortune to meet them, take scandalous advantage; teaze, When will you do me the honour, pray, Sir Luke, to take a bit of mutton with me? Do you name the day.—
They

They are as bad as a beggar, who attacks your coach at the mounting of a hill; there is no getting rid of them, without a penny to one, and a promise to t'other.

Serj. True; and then for such a time too—three weeks! I wonder they expect folks to remember. It is like a retainer in Michaelmas term for the summer assizes.

Sir Luke. Not but, upon these occasions, no man in England is more punctual than—

Enter a Servant, who gives Sir LUKE a Letter.

From whom?

Serv. Earl of Brentford. The servant waits for an answer.

Sir Luke. Answer!—By your leave, Mr. Serjeant and Charlot. [*Reads.*] “Taste for
“music—Monf. Duport—fail—Dinner up—
“on table at five”—Gadso! I hope Sir Gregory’s servant an’t gone.

Serv. Immediately upon receiving the answer.

Sir Luke. Run after him as fast as you can—tell him, quite in despair—recollect an engagement that can’t in nature be missed,—and return in an instant.

Charl. You see, Sir, the knight must give way for my Lord.

Sir Luke. No, faith, it is not that, my dear Charlot; you saw that was quite an extempore business.—No, hang it, no, it

is not for the title; but to tell you the truth, Brentford has more wit than any man in the world; it is that makes me fond of his house.

Charl. By the choice of his company he gives an unanswerable instance of that.

Sir Luke. You are right, my dear girl. But now to give you a proof of his wit: You know Brentford's finances are a little out of repair, which procures him some visits that he would very gladly excuse.

Serj. What need he fear? His person is sacred; for by the tenth of William and Mary—

Sir Luke. He knows that well enough; but for all that—

Serj. Indeed, by a late act of his own house, which does them infinite honour, his goods or chattels may be—

Sir Luke. Seiz'd upon when they can find them; but he lives in ready-furnish'd lodgings, and hires his coach by the month.

Serj. Nay, if the sheriff return “non inventus”—

Sir Luke. A pox o' your law, you make me lose sight of my story. One morning, a Welch coachmaker came with his bill to my Lord, whose name was unluckily Loyd. My Lord had the man up. You are call'd, I think, Mr. Loyd?—At your Lordship's service, my Lord.—What, Loyd with an L?—It was with an L indeed, my Lord.—
Because

Because in your part of the world I have heard that Loyd and Floyd were synonymous, the very same names.—Very often indeed, my lord.—But you always spell your's with an L?—Always.—That, Mr. Loyd, is a little unlucky; for you must know I am now paying my debts alphabetically, and in four or five years you might have come in with an F; but I am afraid I can give you no hopes for your L.—Ha, ha, ha!

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. There was no overtaking the servant.

Sir Luke. That is unlucky: tell my Lord I'll attend him.—I'll call on Sir Gregory myself.

Serj. Why, you won't leave us, Sir Luke?

Sir Luke. Pardon, dear Serjeant and Charlotta; have a thousand things to do for half a million of people positively; promised to procure a husband for Lady Cicely Sulky, and match a coach-horse for Brigadier Whip; after that, must run into the city to borrow a thousand for young At-all at Almack's; send a Cheshire cheese by the stage to Sir Timothy Tankard in Suffolk; and get at the Herald's Office a coat of arms to clap on the coach of Billy Bengal, a nabob newly arriv'd: so you see I have not a moment to lose.

Serj.

Serj. True, true.

Sir Luke. At your toilet to-morrow at ten you may—

Enter a SERVANT abruptly, and runs against Sir LUKE.

Can't you see where you are running, you rascal.

Serv. Sir, his grace the Duke of—

Sir Luke. Grace!—Where is he?—Where—

Serv. In his coach at the door.—If you an't better engaged would be glad of your company to go into the city, and take a dinner at Dolly's.

Sir Luke. In his own coach did you say?

Serv. Yes, Sir.

Sir Luke. With the coronets—or—

Serv. I believe so.

Sir Luke. There's no resisting of that.—

Bid Joe run to Sir Gregory Goose's.

Serv. He is already gone to alderman Inkle's.

Sir Luke. Then do you step to the Knight—hey!—no—you must go to my Lord's—hold, hold, no—I have it—Step first to Sir Greg's, then pop in at Lord Brentford's just as the company are going to dinner.

Serv. What shall I say to Sir Gregory?

Sir Luke. Any thing—what I told you before.

Serv.

Serv. And what to my Lord?

Sir Luke. What!—Why tell him that my uncle from Epsom—no—that won't do, for he knows I don't care a farthing for him—hey!—Why tell him—hold I have it—Tell him, that as I was going into my chair to obey his commands, I was arrested by a couple of bailiffs, forced into a hackney coach, and carried to the Py'd Bull in the Borough; I beg ten thousand pardons for making his grace wait, but his grace knows my misfor—

[*Exit Sir Luke.*]

Charl. Well, Sir, what dy'e think of the proofs? I flatter myself I have pretty well established my case.

Serj. Why, hussy, you have hit upon points; but then they are but trifling flaws, they don't vitiate the title, that stands unimpeach'd; and—But, Madam, your mother.

Enter Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Mrs. Circ. What have you done with the Knight?—Why you have not let him depart?

Charl. It was not in my power to keep him.

Mrs. Circ. I don't wonder at that; but what took him away?

Charl. What will at any time take him away—a Duke at the door.

Mrs.

Mrs. Circ. Are you certain of that?

Serj. Why truly, chuck, his retreat was rather precipitate for a man that is just going to be marry'd.

Mrs. Circ. The prospect of marriage does not always prove the strongest attachment.

Serj. Pardon me, lovee; the law allows no higher consideration than marriage.

Mrs. Circ. Pshaw!

Serj. Infomuch, that if duke A, was to intermarry with chambermaid B, difference of condition would prove no bar to the settlement.

Mrs. Circ. Indeed!

Serj. Ay; and this was held to be law by Chief-baron Bind'em, on the famous case of the Marquis of Cully, and Fanny Flip-flap the French dancer.

Mrs. Circ. The greater blockhead the Baron: but don't pester me with your odious law cases.—Did not you tell me you was to go to Kingston to day to try the crown causes?

Serj. I was begg'd to attend for fear his Lordship should not be able to sit; but if it proves inconvenient to you—

Mrs. Circ. To me! Oh, by no means in the world; I am too good a subject to desire the least delay in the law's execution: and when d'ye set out?

Serj. Between one and two; I shall only just give a law lecture to Jack.

Mrs.

Mrs. Circ. Lord! I wonder Mr. Circuit you would breed that boy up to the bar.

Serj. Why not, chuck? He has fine steady parts, and for his time moots a point—

Mrs. Circ. Steady! stupid you mean: nothing sure cou'd add to his heaviness but the being loaded with law. Why don't you put him into the army?

Serj. Nay, chuck, if you choose it, I believe I have interest to get Jack a commission.

Mrs. Circ. Why, Mr. Circuit, you know he is no son of mine; perhaps a cockade may animate the lad with some fire.

Serj. True, lovee; and a knowledge of the law mayn't be amiss to restrain his fire a little.

Mrs. Circ. I believe there is very little danger of his exceeding that way.

Serj. Charlot, send hither your brother.
[Exit Charlot.]

Mrs. Circ. I'll not interrupt you.

Serj. Far from it, lovee; I should be glad to have you a witness of Jack's improvement.

Mrs. Circ. Of that I am no judge; besides, I am full of business to day—There is to be a ballot at one for the *Ladies Club* lately established, and lady Bab Basso has proposed me for a member.—Pray, my dear

dear, when will you let me have that money to pay my Lord Loo?

Serj. The three hundred you mean?

Mrs. Circ. And besides, there is my debt to Kitty Cribbidge; I protest I almost blush whenever I meet them.

Serj. Why really, lovee, 'tis a large sum of money.—Now, were I worthy to throw in a little advice, we might make a pretty good hand of this business.

Mrs. Circ. I don't understand you.

Serj. Bring an action against them on the statute, in the name of my clerk; and so not only rescue the *debt* from their hands, but recover likewise considerable *damages*.

Mrs. Circ. A pretty conceit, Mr. Serjeant! but does it not occur to your wisdom, that as I have, by the help of Captain Cog, been oftener a winner than loser, the tables may be turned upon *us*?

Serj. No, no, chuck, that did not escape me, I have provided for that.—Do you know, by the law, both parties are equally culpable; so that, lovee, we shall be able to fleece your friends not only of what they have *won* of poor dearee, but likewise for what they have *lost*.

Mrs. Circ. Why, what a paltry, pettifogging puppy art thou!—And could you suppose that I would submit to the scandalous office?

Serj.

Serj. Scandalous! I don't understand this strange perversion of words. The scandal lies in *breaking* the *laws*, not in bringing the offenders to *justice*.

Mrs. Circ. Mean-spirited wretch!—What, do you suppose that those laws could be levell'd against people of their high rank and condition? Can it be thought that any set of men would submit to lay legal restraints on *themselves*?—Absurd and preposterous!

Serj. Why, by their public practice, my love, one would suspect that they thought themselves excepted by a particular clause.

Mrs. Circ. Oh! to be sure; not the least doubt can be made.

Serj. True, chuck—But then your great friends should never complain of highwaymen stopping their coaches, or thieves breaking into their houses.

Mrs. Circ. Why, what has that to do with the business?

Serj. Oh! the natural consequence, lovee; for whilst the superiors are throwing away their fortunes, and consequently their independence *above*—you can't think but their domestics are following their examples *below*.

Mrs. Circ. Well, and what then?

Serj. Then! the same distress that throws the master and mistress into the power of any who are willing to purchase them, by a regular

regular gradation, seduces the servants to actions, though more *criminal*, perhaps not more *atrocious*.

Mrs. Circ. Pshaw! stuff!—I have no head to examine your dirty distinctions—Don't teize me with your jargon.—I have told you the sums I shall want; so take care they are ready at your returning from Kingston.—Nay, don't hesitate; recollect your own state of the case, and remember, my honour is in pawn, and must, some way or other, be redeem'd by the end of the week. [Exit.

Serj. [solus.] My honour is in pawn!—Good Lord! how a century will alter the meaning of words!—Formerly, *chastity* was the honour of women, and *good faith* and *integrity* the honour of men: but *now*, a lady who ruins her family by punctually paying her losses at play, and a gentleman who kills his best friend in some trifling frivolous quarrel, are your only tip-top people of *honour*. Well, let them go on, it brings grist to our mill: for whilst both the sexes stick firm to their *honour*, we shall never want business, —either at Doctor's Commons, or the Old Bailey. [Exit.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T II.

Enter SERJEANT CIRCUIT *and* JACK.

Serj. JACK, let Will bring the chaise to the door.

Jack. Mr. Fairplay, Sir, the attorney, begs to speak a few words.

Serj. How often have I told you, that I will see none of these sort of folks but at chambers; you know how angry your mother is at their rapping, and littering the house.

Jack. He says, Sir, he will not detain you five minutes.

Serj. Well, bid him walk in.

Enter FAIRPLAY.

Well, Mr. Fairplay, what's your will?

Fairplay. I just call'd, Mr. Serjeant, to know your opinion upon the case of young Woodford, and if you like the proposal of being concern'd.

Serj. If it turns out as you state it, and that the father of the lad was really a minor, the Essex estate may without doubt be recover'd; and so may the lands in the North.

Fairplay. We have full proofs to that fact.

V O L. II.

O

Serj.

Serj. May be so; but really Mr. Fairplay, you know the length of time that these kind of suits—

Fairplay. True Sir, but then your experience will shorten I appreh—

Serj. That's more than I know: and then not only my fees lying dormant, but, perhaps, an expectation of money advanc'd.

Fairplay. The property, Sir, is of very great value, and, upon the recovery, any acknowledgment shall be readily made.

Serj. There again, *any!* do you know that in law, that word *any* has no meaning at all? besides, when people are in distress, they are lavish enough of their offers; but when their business is done, then we have nothing but grumbling and grudging.

Fairplay. You have only to dictate your terms.

Serj. Does the lad live in town?

Fairplay. He has been under my care since the death of his father; I have given him as good an education as my narrow fortune would let me; he is now studying the law in the Temple, in hopes that should he fail of other assistance, he may be able one day to do *himself* justice.

Serj. In the Temple?

Fairplay. Yes, Sir, in those little chambers just over your head—I fancy the young gentleman knows him.

Jack.

Jack. Who? Mr. Woodford! Lord as well as myself, he is a sweet sober youth, and will one day make a vast figure, I am sure.

Serj. Indeed!

Jack. I am positive, Sir, if you were to hear him speak at the Robinhood in the Butcher-row, you would say so yourself: why he is now reckon'd the third; except the breeches-maker from Barbican, and Sawny Sinclair the snuffman, there is not a mortal can touch him.

Serj. Peace, puppy; well Mr. Fairplay, leave the papers a little longer with me and—pray who is employ'd against you?

Fairplay. A city attorney, one Sheepskin.

Serj. A cunning fellow, I know him; well, Sir, if you will call at Pump-court in a week.

Fairplay. I shall attend you.

Serj. Jack, open the door for Mr.—
[*Exeunt Fairplay and Jack.*] Something may be made of this matter: I'll see this Sheepskin myself. So much in future for carrying on the suit, or so much in hand to make it miscarry: a wise man should well weigh which party to take for.

Enter JACK.

So, Jack, any body at chambers to day?

Jack. Fieri Facias from Fetter-lane, about the bill to be filed by Kit Crape against Will Vizard, this term.

Serj. Praying for an equal partition of plunder?

Jack. Yes, Sir.

Serj. Strange world we live in, that even highwaymen can't be true to each other! [*half aside to himself.*] but we shall make master Vizard refund, we'll shew him what long hands the law has.

Jack. Facias says, that in all the books he can't hit on a precedent.

Serj. Then I'll make one myself; *aut inveniam, aut faciam*, has been always my motto. The charge must be made for partnership-profit, by bartering lead and gunpowder, against money, watches, and rings, on Epping-forest, Hounslow-heath, and other parts of the kingdom.

Jack. He says, if the court should get scent of the scheme, the parties would all stand committed.

Serj. Cowardly rascal! but however, the caution mayn't prove amiss. [*Aside.*] I'll not put my own name to the bill.

Jack. The declaration too is deliver'd in the cause of Roger Rapp'em against Sir Solomon Simple.

Serj. What, the affair of the note?

Jack. Yes.

Serj. Why he is clear that his client never gave such a note.

Jack. Defendant never saw plaintiff since the hour he was born; but, notwithstanding,

ing, they have three witnesses to prove a consideration, and signing the note.

Serj. They have?

Jack. He is puzzled what plea to put in.

Serj. Three witnesses ready, you say?

Jack. Yes.

Serj. Tell him Simple must acknowledge the note, [*Jack starts*] and bid him, against the trial comes on, to procure *four* persons at least to prove the payment, at the Crown and Anchor, the 10th of December.

Jack. But then how comes the note to remain in plaintiff's possession?

Serj. Well put, Jack; but we have a *salvo* for that; plaintiff happen'd not to have the note in his pocket, but promis'd to deliver it up, when call'd thereunto by defendant.

Jack. That will do rarely.

Serj. Let the defence be a secret, for I see we have able people to deal with. But come, child, not to lose time, have you carefully conn'd those instructions I gave you?

Jack. Yes, Sir.

Serj. Well, that we shall see. How many points are the great object of practice?

Jack. Two.

Serj. Which are they?

Jack. The first is to put a man into possession of what is his right.

Serj. The second?

Jack. Either to deprive a man of what is *really* his right, or to keep him as long as possible *out* of possession.

Serj. Good boy! To gain the last end, what are the best means to be us'd?

Jack. Various and many are the legal modes of delay.

Serj. Name them.

Jack. Injunctions, demurrers, sham-pleas, writs of error, rejoinders, sur-rejoinders, rebutters, sur-rebutters, replications, exceptions, essoigns, and imparlance.

Serj. [*To himself.*] Fine instruments in the hands of a man, who knows how to use them.—But now, Jack, we come to the point: if an able advocate has his choice in a cause, which if he is in reputation he may readily have, which side should he choose, the right, or the wrong?

Jack. A great lawyer's business, is always to make choice of the wrong.

Serj. And prythee why so?

Jack. Because a good cause can speak for itself, whilst a bad one demands an able counsellor to give it a colour.

Serj. Very well. But in what respects will this answer to the lawyer himself?

Jack. In a two-fold way; firstly, his fees will be large in proportion to the dirty work he is to do.

Serj. Secondly?—

Jack. His reputation will rise, by obtaining the victory in a desperate cause.

Serj. Right, boy.—Are you ready in the case of the cow?

Jack. Pretty well, I believe.

Serj.

Serj. Give it then.

Jack. First of April, anno seventeen hundred and blank, John a Nokes was indicted by blank, before blank, in the country of blank, for stealing a cow, contra pacem etcet.— and against the statute in that case provided and made, to prevent stealing of cattle.

Serj. Go on.

Jack. Said Nokes was convicted upon the said statute.

Serj. What follow'd upon?—

Jack. Motion in arrest of judgment, made by counsellor Puzzle. First, Because the field from whence the cow was convey'd is laid in the indictment as *round*, but turn'd out upon proof to be *square*.

Serj. That's well: a valid objection.

Jack. Secondly, Because in said indictment the colour of the cow is called red, there being no such things in rerum natura as red cows, no more than black lions, spread eagles, flying griffins, or blue boars.

Serj. Well put.

Jack. Thirdly, said Nokes has not offended against form of the statute; because stealing of *cattle* is there provided against: whereas we are only convicted of stealing a *cow*. Now, though cattle may be cows, yet it does by no means follow that cows must be cattle.

Serj. Bravo, bravo! bus me, you rogue; you are your father's own son! go on, and

prosper.—I am sorry, dear Jack, I must leave thee. If Providence but sends thee life and health, I prophesy, thou wilt wrest as much land from the owners, and save as many thieves from the gallows, as any practitioner since the days of king Alfred.

Jack. I'll do my endeavour. [*Exit Serjeant.*]
So!—father is set off. Now if I can but lay eyes on our Charlot, just to deliver this letter, before madam comes home. There she is.—Hist, sister Charlot!

Enter CHARLOT.

Charl. What have you got there, Jack?

Jack. Something for you, sister.

Charl. For me! Prythee what is it?

Jack. A thing.

Charl. What thing?

Jack. A thing that will please you I'm sure.

Charl. Come, don't be a boy, let me have it. [*Jack gives the letter.*] How's this! a letter! from whom?

Jack. Can't you guess?

Charl. Not I; I don't know the hand.

Jack. May be not; but you know the inditer.

Charl. Then tell me his name.

Jack. Break open the seal, and you'll find it.

Charl. [*Opening the letter*] "Charles Woodford!"—I am sure I know nothing of him.

Jack.

Jack. Ay, but sister you do.

Charl. How! when, and where?

Jack. Don't you remember about three weeks ago, when you drank tea at our chambers, there was a young gentleman in a blue fattin waistcoat, who wore his own head of hair?

Charl. Well?

Jack. That letter's from he.

Charl. What can be his business with me?

Jack. Read that, and you'll know.

Charl. [*reads.*] "Want words to apologize—hum, hum—very first moment
"I saw you—hum, hum—smother'd long
"in my breast—hum, hum—happiest, or
"else the most wretched of men."—So, Sir, you have undertaken a pretty commission! and what do you think my father will—

Jack. Why, I hope you won't go for to tell him.

Charl. Indeed, Sir, but I shall.

Jack. No, sister, I'm sure you won't be so cross. Besides, what could I do? The poor young lad begg'd so hard; and there for this fortnight he has gone about sighing, and musing, and moping: I am satisfied it would melt you to see him. Do, sister, let me bring him this evening, now father is out.

Charl. Upon my word!—The young man has made no bad choice of an agent; you
are

are for pushing matters at once.—But harkee, Sir, who is this spark you are so anxious about? And how long have you known him?

Jack. Oh! a prodigious long while: above a month I am certain. Don't you think him mighty genteel? I assure you he is vastly lik'd by the ladies.

Charl. He is.

Jack. Yes, indeed. Mrs. Congo, at the Grecian coffee-house, says, he's the soberest youth that comes to the house; and all Mrs. Mittens's 'prentices throw down their work, and run to the window every time he goes by.

Charl. Upon my word!

Jack. And moreover, besides that, he has several great estates in the country; but only for the present, he is kept out of 'em all by the owners.

Charl. Ah, Jack! that's the worst part of the story.

Jack. Pshaw! that's nothing at all. His guardian, Mr. Fairplay, has been with father to-day, and says, he is certain that he can set all to rights in a trice.

Charl. Well, Jack, when that point is determin'd, it will be time enough to—

Jack. Then! Lord of mercy! why, sister Charlot, it is my private opinion that if you don't give him some crumbs of comfort, he won't live till Midsummer term.

Charl.

Charl. I warrant you. Either Cupid's darts were always but poetical engines, or they have been lately depriv'd of their points. Love holds no place in the modern bills of mortality. However, Jack, you may tell your friend, that I have observ'd his frequent walks in our street.

Jack. Walks! Why one should think he was appointed to relieve the old watchman; for no sooner one is off, but the other comes on.

Charl. And that from his eyes being constantly fixed on my window, for the information of which, I presume he is indebted to you.—

Jack. He! he! he!

Charl. I had a pretty shrewd guess at his business; but tell him that unless my father—Hush! our tyrant is return'd. Don't leave the house till I see you.

Enter Mrs. CIRCUIT and BETTY.

Mrs. Circuit. So, Sir, what makes you loitering from chambers? I thought I told you, you should never be here but at meals? [*Exit Jack.*] One spy is enough in a family.—Miss, you may go to your room; and d'ye hear—I shall have company, so you need not come down. [*Exit Charlot.*—Betty, no message or letter?

Betty. None, Madam.

Mrs.

Mrs. Circ. That is amazing!—You know I expect Colonel Secret and Mrs. Simper every instant.

Betty. Yes, Madam.

Mrs. Circ. Put the fruit and the wine on the table in the next room.

Betty. Very well, Madam.

Mrs. Circ. And, Betty, order the fellow to let no body in but Sir Luke.

Betty. Madam, I shall take care. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. Circ. [*sits down.*] The ballot must be over by this time. Sure there is nothing so dreadful as a state of suspense: but should they black ball me!—No, there's no danger of that; miss Mattadore has insur'd me success.—Well, this is certainly one of the most useful institutions; it positively supplies the only point of time one does not know how to employ. From twelve, the hour of one's rising, to dinner, is a most horrible chasm; for though teizing the mercers and milliners by tumbling their wares, is now and then an entertaining amusement, yet upon repetition it palls.—But every morning to be sure of a party, and then again at night after a rout, to have a place to retire to; to be quite freed from all pain of providing; not to be pester'd at table with the odious company of clients, and country cousins; for I am determin'd to dine, and sup at the club, every

every day. I can tell 'em, they'll have but very few forfeits from me.

Enter BETTY, in haste, with a Letter.

Betty. By a chairman, Madam, from the Thatch'd House.

Mrs. Circ. Give it me, Betty, this instant;—ay—this is Mattadore's hand. [*opens and reads the letter.*] “My dear Circuit—it is with the utmost concern, and confusion, I find myself oblig'd to acquaint you, that notwithstanding all the pains I have taken, the club have thought fit to reject.”—Oh! [*she faints.*]

Betty. Bless my soul! my lady is gone!—John! Will! Kitty! run hither this instant—

Enter two MAIDS and a Man SERVANT.

All. What, what's the matter?

Betty. Quick! quick! some hartshorn and water [*pats her hand.*] Madam! Madam—

Serv. Here! here! here! [*brings water.*]

Betty. John, go for the potter-carrier this instant—I believe to my soul she is dead—Kitty, fetch some feathers to burn under her nose;—there, stand further off, and give her some air—

Enter Sir LUKE.

Sir Luke. Hey day! what the deuce is the matter? what's the meaning of all this, Mrs. Betty?

Betty.

Betty. Oh! Sir, is it you—my poor lady! [*cries*] clap the bottle hard to her nose.

Sir Luke. But how came it about?

Betty. Some of the *continents* of that curs'd letter, she has there in her hand.

Sir Luke. Here, here, take some of my eau de luce. [*offering a bottle.*]

Betty. There! she recovers a little—some water—I believe it is nothing but a *satirical* fit, I have had them myself—now she opens her eyes—so, so—bend her forward a little.

Sir Luke. My sweet Mrs. Circuit.

Mrs. Circ. Who is that?

Betty. Nobody at all Madam, but only Sir Luke.

Mrs. Circ. Oh! Sir Luke, such a stroke, so fatal, so sudden, it is not in nature I should ever survive it.

Sir Luke. Marry heaven forbid! but what cause—what could—

Mrs. Circ. Leave the room. [*To the servants, who go out.*] Only, look over that letter.

Sir Luke. Hum, hum,—[*reads*] “fit to reject you—this—

Mrs. Circ. There! there! there!

Sir Luke. I own this is the utmost malice of fortune—but let me finish the letter.—
“This calamity, dear Circuit, is of such a
“nature as baffles all advice, or interposi-
“tion

“tion of friends, I shall therefore leave
“you to time, and your own good under-
“standing.” [*pretty and sensible.*]—yours,”
&c.—But let us see, what says the post-
script—[*reads.*] “Perhaps it may give you
“some comfort to know that you had
“sixteen almonds, and but two raisins
against you.

Mrs. Circ. But two!

Sir Luke. No more.

Mrs. Circ. This must be Kitty Cribbage’s
doing, she has been tattling about the
paltry trifle I owe her.

Sir Luke. Not unlikely: but come, bear
up, my dear madam, and consider that
two—

Mrs. Circ. Is as bad as two thousand.

Sir Luke. Granted; but perhaps it mayn’t
be too late to repair.—Gadso! I have
thought of a scheme—I’ll be elected my-
self, and then I warrant we manage—

Mrs. Circ. You, Sir Luke? that never
can be.

Sir Luke. No, Madam, and why not?—
why you don’t suppose that they wou’d
venture to—

Mrs. Circ. It would not only be against
the spirit, but the very letter of their con-
stitution to chuse you a member.

Sir Luke. Ay, Madam, how so?

Mrs. Circ. Their statutes are selected from
all the codes that ever existed from the
days of Lycurgus to the present Czarina.

Sir Luke.

Sir Luke. Well.

Mrs. Circ. The law that relates to your case they have borrow'd from the Roman religion.

Sir Luke. As how?

Mrs. Circ. As no man can be admitted a monk, who has the least corporal spot, or defect; so, no candidate can be receiv'd as a member who is depriv'd of the use of any one of his limbs.

Sir Luke. Nay, then indeed I am clearly cut out; that incapacity can never be got over.

Mrs. Circ. Indeed, the Serjeant says, if the club could be induc'd to *resolve* in your favour, then the *original law* would signify nothing.

Sir Luke. Well, well, we'll see what can be done. [*A loud knocking.*] But hush! the company's come; collect yourself, sweet Mrs. Circuit; don't give your enemies the malicious pleasure of seeing how this disappointment affects you.

Mrs. Circ. Never fear; I know a little too much of the world not to turn this defeat to my credit.

Enter Colonel SECRET and Mrs. SIMPER.

Mrs. Simp. Your servant, Sir Luke; my dear Circuit, I am frighten'd to death—your people tell me, you are but just recover'd from a—

Mrs.

Mrs. Circ. Oh! nothing at all! a faintness, a kind of swimming—but those people are ever swelling that mole hills to mountains.

Mrs. Simp. I protest I was afraid that you had suffer'd your late disappointment to lay hold of your spirits.

Mrs. Circ. What disappointment, my dear?

Colonel. Mrs. Simper hints at the little mistake made this morning at the Thatch'd House.

Mrs. Circ. That! ridiculous! I could have told you that a fortnight ago, child—all my own doing.

—*Mrs. Simp.* How!

Sir Luke. Entirely.

Mrs. Circuit. Oh! I always detested the thoughts of the thing;—they would put me up, let me say what I would, so I was reduc'd to the necessity of prevailing upon two of my friends to *black ball* me.

Mrs. Simp. That, indeed, alters the case.

Colonel. I am vastly happy to hear it: your old acquaintance were afraid they should lose you.

Mrs. Circ. It is a sign they know but little of me—but come, my good folks, I have prepared a small collation in the next room, will you—

[*Exeunt.*

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Enter

Enter JACK and WOODFORD.

Jack. I'll watch sister, to see that nobody comes; now Woodford make good use of your time. [*Exit Woodford.*] There, I have left 'em together; if I had staid, I don't believe they would have open'd their mouths for a month: I never saw such an alteration in a lad since the day I was born. — Why, if I had not known him before, I should not have thought he had a word to throw to a dog; but I remember the old proverb:

*True lovers are shy,
When people are by.*

I'll take a peep to see how they go on:—there they are, just in the same posture I left them; she folding her fingers, and he twirling his hat; why they don't even look at each other: was there ever such a couple of—stay, stay, now he opens his mouth—pshaw!—lord! there he shuts it again—hush! I hear somebody coming—no—nothing at all:—mother is safe I am sure,—there is no danger from her—now let us take t'other—[*peeps at the door.*] hum!—gadso, matters are mightily mended—there! there! very well—there he lays down the law—now he claps his hand on his heart—vastly pretty, I vow—there he swops with both his knees on the ground—charming!—and squeezes his hat with both

both hands, like one of the actors—delightful! she wants him to rise, and he won't—prodigious moving indeed!

Enter BETTY.

Betty. So Sir, what are you doing there?

Jack. There! where?

Betty. With your eyes glew'd close to the keyhole.

Jack. I wanted to speak a word to my sister.

Betty. Then why don't you open her door?

Jack. I did not know but she might be saying her prayers.

Betty. Prayers! a likely story! Who says their prayers at this time of the day?—No, no, that won't pass upon me.—Let me look—very pretty! So, so, I see there's somebody else at his prayers too—fine doings!—As soon as the company goes, I shall take care to inform Madam your mother.

Jack. Nay, but Mrs. Betty you won't be so—

Betty. Indeed, Mr. John, but I shall—I'll swallow none of your secrets, believe me.

Jack. What, perhaps your stomach is overloaded already.

Betty. No matter for that, I shall be even with Miss for telling Master about and concerning my drums.

Jack. Why, Mrs. Betty, surely sister could not—

Betty. When she very well knows that I have not sent cards but twice the whole season.

Jack. Lord! what signi—

Betty. What would she say, if she visited the great families I do? For tho' I am as I may say but a commoner, no private gentleman's gentlewoman, has a more prettier set of acquaintance.

Jack. Well but—

Betty. My routs indeed!—There is Mrs. Allspice, who lives with lady Cicily Sequence, has fix tables every Sunday, besides looers, and braggers; and moreover proposes giving a masquerade, the beginning of June, and I intends being there.

Jack. Well, but to talk calmly.

Betty. And as Miss is so fond of fetching and carrying, you may tell her we are to have a private play among ourselves, as the quality have: the *Distrustful* Mother, 'tis call'd—Pylades, by Mr. Thomas, Lord Catastrophe's butler—Hermione, Mrs. Allspice; and I shall do Andromache myself.

Jack. A play! lord, Mrs. Betty, will you give me a ticket?

Betty. All's one for that—and so you may tell Miss that—[bell rings] coming, Madam, this minute—and that, Mr. John,

is

is the long and the short on't. [*Bell rings again.*] Lord, I am coming— [*Exit.*]

Enter WOODFORD *to* JACK.

Woodf. What's the matter?

Jack. Here, Betty, my mother's fac totum, has just discover'd your haunts; and is gone to lay an information against you—so depend upon it, a search warrant will issue directly.

Woodf. Stay but a moment, till I take leave of your sister.

Jack. Zooks! I tell you the constables will be here in a trice, so you have not a moment to lose.

Woodf. How unlucky this is!

Jack. But I hope you have obtain'd a verdict however.

Woodf. No.

Jack. No!

Woodf. It would not have been decent, to have press'd the judge too soon for a sentence.

Jack. Soon!—You are a ninny, I tell you so:—here you will suffer judgment to go by default.—You are a pretty practitioner indeed!

Woodf. This, you may know, my dear Jack, is an equity case; I have but just fil'd my bill; one must give the parties time to put in an answer.

TDA

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Jack.

Jack. Time!—How you may come off in court I can't tell, but you will turn out but a poor chamber counsel I fear.—Well, come along, perhaps I may be able to procure another hearing before it is—but lord o'mercy! there is father crossing the hall—should he see us all's over—we have nothing for't but taking shelter with sister.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

*Sir LUKE LIMP, Mrs. CIRCUIT,
Colonel SECRET, and Mrs. SIMPER,
discover'd at a table, with a collation
before them.*

Mrs. Circ. OH! by the bye, Sir Luke—
take some of these sweet-
meats, my dear [*to Mrs. Simper*—did not
you promise to introduce to me that little
agreeable piece of imperfection that be-
longs to the opera?—Colonel, won't you
taste the champaign?

Sir Luke. Who, Signior *Piano*?—Let me
assist Mrs. Simper.—Why, Madam, I made
an attempt; but at present—shan't I send
you a biscuit?—he is in the possession of a
certain lady, who never suffers him out of
her sight for a moment.

Mrs. Simp. Oh! the curmudgeon!—I
am vastly fond of these custards.

Sir Luke. Yes, they have a delicate flavour
—but he promis'd, if possible, to escape
for an hour—won't you? [*to Mrs. Circuit.*]

Mrs. Circ. No, it gives me the heart-
burn.—Then let us leave him a cover.

Colonel. By all means in the world.

Mrs. Circ. But there is, likewise, another party, for whom a place ought to be kept.

Mrs. Simp. Another! Who can that be I wonder?

Mrs. Circ. A small appendix of mine.

Sir Luke. How, Madam!

Mrs. Circ. You need not be jealous, Sir Luke—taste that tart Mrs. Simper—it is only my husband the Serjeant.—Ha! ha! ha!—Betty makes them herself.

Mrs. Simp. Oh! you abominable creature! How could such a thought come into your head?

Sir Luke. Ma'am— [Offering sweetmeats to Mrs. Simper.]

Mrs. Simp. Not a bit more, I thank you.—I swear and vow I should swoon at the sight.

Mrs. Circ. And I should receive him with the polite indifference of an absolute stranger.

Sir Luke. Well said, my good Lady Intrepid! But, notwithstanding, I would venture a trifle that his appearance would give you such an electrical shock—

Mrs. Circ. You are vastly deceiv'd.

Sir Luke. Dare you come to the proof? Will you give me leave to introduce Mr. Serjeant? He is not far off.

Mrs. Circ. What, my husband?

Sir

Sir Luke. Even he! I saw him as I enter'd the hall.

Mrs. Circ. Impossible!

Sir Luke. Nay, then I must fetch him.

[*Exit Sir Luke.*]

Colonel. I can't conceive what the knight wou'd be at.

Mrs. Simp. Why he is mad.

Mrs. Circ. Or turn'd fool.

Enter Sir LUKE, with the SERJEANT'S peruke on a block.

Sir Luke. Now, Madam, have I reason? Is this your husband or not?

Mrs. Simp. It is he; not the least doubt can be made.

Colonel. Yes, yes, it is the Serjeant himself.

Mrs. Circ. I own it; I acknowledge the lord of my wishes. [*Kisses the block.*]

Mrs. Simp. All his features are there!

Colonel. The grave cast of his countenance!

Sir Luke. The vacant stare of his eye!

Mrs. Circ. The livid hue of his lips!

Mrs. Simp. The rubies with which his cheeks are enrich'd!

Colonel. The silent solemnity when he sits on the bench!

Mrs. Circ. We must have him at table; but pray good folks let my husband appear like himself.—I'll run for the gown.

[*Exit.*]

Mrs.

Mrs. Simp. By all means in the world.

Sir Luke. Dispatch, I beseech you.

Mrs. CIRCUIT returns with a gown and band.

Mrs. Circ. Sir Luke, lend your assistance.

Colonel. There, place him at the head of the table.

[*They fix the head at the back of a chair, and place it at table; then all sit.*

Mrs. Simp. Madam, you'll take care of your husband.

Mrs. Circ. I don't want to be put in mind of my duty.

Mrs. Simp. Oh! Madam! I know that very well.

Sir Luke. Come, Hob or Nob, Master Circuit—let us try if we can't fuddle the Serjeant.

Colonel. O! fye! have a proper respect for the coif.

Mrs. Simp. Don't be too facetious, Sir Luke: it is not quite so safe to sport with the heads of the law; you don't know how soon you may have a little business together.

Sir Luke. But come, the Serjeant is sulky.—I have thought of a way to divert him:—You know he is never so happy as when he is hearing a cause; suppose we were to plead one before him; Mrs. Circuit and I to be counsel, the colonel the clerk, and Mrs. Simper the cryer.

Mrs.

Mrs. Circ. The finest thought in the world! And stay, to conduct the trial with proper solemnity, let's rummage his wardrobe; we shall there be able to equip ourselves with suitable dresses.

Sir Luke. Alons, alons!

Mrs. Simp. There is no time to be lost.

[*All rise.*

Mrs. Circ. [*Stopping short as they are going out.*] But won't my husband be angry, if we leave him alone? Bye, dearee—we shall soon return to thee again. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Serj. CIRCUIT, not perceiving the collation.

Serj. So, my lord not being able to sit, there was no occasion for me.—I can't put that girl's nonsense out of my head—My wife is young to be sure, and loves pleasure I own; but as to the *main* article, I have not the least ground to suspect her in that—No, no!—And then Sir Luke! my *prossen ami*, the dearest friend I have in the—Heyday! [*seeing the collation*] What the deuce have we here?—A collation!—So, so—I see Madam knows how to divert herself during my absence.—What's this? [*seeing the block*] Oh, ho! ha! ha! ha!—Well, that's pretty enough I protest.—Poor girl, I see she could not be happy without having something at table that resembled me.—How pleas'd she will be to find me
here

here in propria persona.—By your leave, Mrs. Circuit—[*sits down and eats*] Delicate eating, in truth—and the wine [*drinks*]—Champaign as I live—must have t'other glass—They little think how that gentleman there regales himself in their absence—Ha! ha! ha!—quite convenient, I vow—the heat of the weather has made me—Come, brother Coif, here's your health—[*drinks*]—I must pledge myself I believe—[*drinks again*]—devilish strong—pslut!—Somebody's coming—[*gets up and goes towards the wings*]—What do I see? Four lawyers! What the devil can be the meaning of this? I should be glad to get at the bottom of—Hey! By your leave, brother Serjeant—I must crave the use of your robe—[*sits down, and gets under the gown*]—Between ourselves, this is not the first time this gown has cover'd a fraud.

Enter Sir LUKE, Colonel, Mrs. CIRCUIT, and Mrs. SIMPER, dressed as counsellors.

Sir Luke. Come, come, gentlemen, dispatch, the court has been waiting some time. Brother Circuit, you have look'd over your brief?

Mrs. Circ. What, do you suppose, Sir, that like some of our brethren I defer that till I come into court? No, no.

Sir

Sir Luke. This cause contains the whole marrow and pith of all modern practice.

Mrs. Circ. One should think, Sir Luke, you had been bred to the bar.

Sir Luke. Child, I was some years in the Temple; but the death of my brother robb'd the robe of my labours.

Mrs. Simp. What a loss to the public!

Sir Luke. You are smart, Mrs. Simper. I can tell you, Serjeant Snuffle, whose manner I study'd, pronounc'd me a promising youth.

Mrs. Simp. I don't doubt it.

Sir Luke. But let us to business. And first, for the state of the case: The parties you know are Hobson and Nobson; the object of litigation is a small parcel of land, which is to decide the fate of a borough.

Mrs. Circ. True; call'd Turnbury Mead.

Sir Luke. Very well. Then to bring matters to a short issue, it was agreed, that Nobson should on the premises cut down a tree, and Hobson bring his action of damage.

Mrs. Circ. True, true.

Sir Luke. The jury being sworn, and the counsellors feed, the court may proceed.—Take your seats—But hold—I hope no gentleman has been touch'd on both sides.

All. Oh! fye!

Sir Luke. Let silence be call'd.

Mrs. Simp. Silence in the court!

Sir

Sir Luke. But stop. To be regular, and provide for fresh causes, we must take no notice of the borough and lands, the real objects in view, but stick fast to the tree, which is of no importance at all.

All. True, true.

Sir Luke. Brother Circuit, you may proceed.

Mrs. Circ. Gentlemen of the Jury.—I am in this cause counsel for Hobson, the plaintiff.—The action is brought against Nebuchadonezer Nobson, That he the said Nobson did cut down a tree, value twopence, and to his own use said tree did convert.—Nobson justifies, and claims that tree as his tree. We will, gentlemen, first state the probable evidence, and then come to the positive: and first as to the probable.—When was this tree here belonging to Hobson, and claim'd by Nobson, cut down? Was it cut down publicly in the day, in the face of the sun, men, women, and children, all the world looking on?—No; it was cut down privately, in the night, in a dark night, nobody *did* see, nobody *could* see.—Hum—And then with respect and regard to this tree, I am instructed to say, gentlemen, it was a beautiful, an ornamental tree to the spot where it grew. Now can it be thought that any man would come for to go in the middle of the night, nobody seeing, no body *did* see, no body *could* see,

see, and cut down a tree, which tree was an ornamental tree, if tree had been his tree?—Certainly no.—And again, gentlemen, we moreover insist, that this tree was not only ornamental to the spot where it grew, but it was a useful tree to the owner: it was a plumb-tree, and not only a plum-tree, but I am authoriz'd to say the best of plum-trees, it was a damson plum.—Now can it be thought, that any man wou'd come for to go, in the middle of the night, nobody seeing, nobody *did* see, nobody *could* see, and cut down a tree; which tree was not only an ornamental tree, but a useful tree; and not only a useful tree, but a plum-tree; and not only a plum-tree, but the best of plum-trees, a damson plum? Most assuredly no.—If so be then, that this be so, and so it most certainly is, I apprehend no doubt will remain with the court, but my client a verdict will have, with full costs of suits, in such a manner and so forth, as may nevertheless appear notwithstanding.

Sir Luke. Have you done, Mr. Serjeant?

Mrs. Circ. You may proceed.

Sir Luke. Gentlemen of the jury—I am in this cause counsel for Hob—Zouns! I think the head moves.

All. Hey!

Colonel. No, no, Mrs. Simper jogg'd the chair with her foot, that was all.

Sir

Sir Luke. For Hercules Hobson—I cou'd have sworn it had stir'd—I sha'nt gentlemen upon this occasion, attempt to move your passions, by flowing periods, and rhetorical flowers, as Mr. Serjeant has done; no, gentlemen, if I get at your hearts, I will make my way thro' your heads, however thick they may be—in order to which, I will pursue the learned gentleman, thro' what he calls his probable proofs: and first, as to this tree's being cut down in the night; in part we will grant him that point, but, under favour, not a dark night, Mr. Serjeant; no, quite the reverse, we can prove that the moon shone bright, with uncommon lustre that night—So that if so be as how people did not see that was none—[*Serjeant sneezes.*]—nay, Mrs. Circuit, if you break the thread of my—

Mrs. Circ. Me break!—I said nothing I'm sure.

Sir Luke. That's true, but you sneez'd.

Mrs. Circ. Not I.

Sir Luke. I am sure somebody did; it could not be the head—consider the least interruption puts one out of one's—None of our faults, they might have look'd on and seen if they would. And then as to this beautiful tree, with which Mr. Serjeant has ornamented his spot—No, gentlemen, no such matter at all; I am instructed to say quite the reverse; a stunted tree, a blighted,

blighted, blasted tree; a tree not only limblefs, and leafless, but very near lifeless; that was the true state of the tree: and then as to its use, we own it was a plum-tree indeed, but not of the kind Mr. Serjeant sets forth, a damfin plum; our proofs say loudly a bull plum; but if so be and it had been a damfin plum, will any man go for to say, that a damfin plum is the best kind of plum; not a whit, I take upon me to say it is not a noun substantive plum—with plenty of sugar it does pretty well indeed in a tart, but to eat it by itself, will Mr. Serjeant go to compare it with the queen mother, the padrigons.

Serj. [*Appearing suddenly from under the gown.*] The green gages, or the orlines.

Mrs. Circ. As I live 'tis my husband!

Serj. Nay, Sir Luke don't you run away too—give me a buss—since I was born, I never heard a finer reply; I am sorry I did not hear your argument out—but I cou'd not resist.

Sir Luke. This I own was a little surprise—had you been long here Mr. Serjeant?

Serj. But the instant you enter'd.

Sir Luke. So, then all is safe. [*Aside.*

Serj. But come, won't you refresh you, Sir Luke—you have had hard duty to day:

Sir Luke. I drank very freely at table.

Serj. Nay, for the matter of that, I ha'n't been idle; [*both drink.*] But come,

V O L. II.

Q

throw

throw off your gown, and let us finish the bottle: I ha'n't had such a mind to be merry I can't tell the day when.

Sir Luke. Nay then, Mr. Serjeant, have at you—come, here's long life and health to the law. [*Drinks.*]

Serj. I'll pledge that toast in a bumper. —[*Drinks.*]—I'll take Charlot's hint, and see if I can't draw the truth out of the Knight by a bottle. [*Aside.*]

Sir Luke. I'll try if I can't fuddle the fool, and get rid of him that way. [*Aside.*]

Serj. I could not have thought it: why where the deuce did you pick up all this? But by the bye, pray who was the cryer?

Sir Luke. Did not you know her? Mrs. Simper, your neighbour.

Serj. A pestilent jade! she's a good one I warrant.

Sir Luke. She is thought very pretty; what say you to a glass in her favor?

Serj. By all means in the world! [*they drink*] and that spark the clerk?

Sir Luke. Colonel Secret, a friend to the lady you toasted.

Serj. A friend! oh, ay—I understand you—come, let us join 'em together.

Sir Luke. Alons. [*drinks.*] Egad, I shall be caught in my own trap, I begin to feel myself fluster'd already. [*Aside.*]

Serj.

Serj. Delicate white wine, indeed! I like it better every glass. [*Sings.*]

*Drink and drive care away,
Drink and be merry.*

Sir Luke. True, my dear Serjeant—this is the searcher of secrets—the only key to the heart.

Serj. Right boy, in veritas vino.

Sir Luke. No deceit in a bumper. [*Sings.*]
Drink and be merry.

Serj. Merry! dammee, what a sweet fellow you are; what would I give, to be half so jolly and gay.

Sir Luke. [*Appearing very drunk.*] Would you? and yet do you know, Serjeant, that at this very juncture of time, there is a thing has popp'd into my head, that distresses me very much.

Serj. Then drive it out with a bumper [*Drinks.*] Well, how is it now.

Sir Luke. Now!—the matter is not mended at all.

Serj. What the deuce is the business that so sticks in your stomach.

Sir Luke. You know, my dear Serjeant, I am your friend, your real, your affectionate friend.

Serj. I believe it, Sir Luke.

Sir Luke. And yet, for these six months, I have conceal'd a secret, that touches you near, very near—

Serj. Me near! That was wrong, very wrong; friends should have all things in common.

Sir Luke. That's what I said to myself; Sir Luke, says I, open your heart to your friend; but to tell you the truth, what sealed up my lips, was the fear that this secret should make you sulky and sad.

Serj. Me sulky and sad! ha! ha! how little you know of me.

Sir Luke. Swear then that you won't be uneasy.

Serj. Well, I do.

Sir Luke. [*Rising.*] Soft! let us see that all's safe;—well, Mr. Serjeant, do you know that you are—a fine, honest fellow?

Serj. Is that such a secret?

Sir Luke. Be quiet; a damn'd honest fellow—but as to your wife—

Serj. Well?

Sir Luke. She is an infamous strum—

Serj. How! it is a falsehood Sir Luke, my wife is as virtuous a wom—

Sir Luke. Oh! if you are angry, your servant—I thought that the news would have pleas'd you—for after all, what is the business to me? What do I get by the bargain?

Serj. That's true; but then would it not vex any man to hear his wife abus'd in such a—

Sir Luke. Not if it's true, you old fool.

Serj.

Serj. I say it is false: prove it; give me that satisfaction Sir Luke.

Sir Luke. Oh! you shall have that pleasure directly; and to come at once to the point—you remember last New-year's day how severely it froze.

Serj. I do recollect.

Sir Luke. Very well; we were all invited to dine at Alderman Inkle's.

Serj. Very right.

Sir Luke. Well, and I did not go: Mrs. Circuit made me dine here, in this house—was it my fault?

Serj. No, no, Sir Luke, no.

Sir Luke. At table says she—she said, I was the picture of you—was it my fault?

Serj. Well, and suppose you are; where's the mischief in that?

Sir Luke. Be quiet, I tell you;—then throwing her arms round my neck,—it is my husband himself I embrace, it is my little old man that I kiss!—for she has a prodigious affection for you at bottom—was it my fault?

Serj. But what is there serious in this, dost think I mind such trifles?

Sir Luke. Hold your tongue, you fool, for a moment—then throwing her Teresa aside—upon my soul she is prodigious fine every where here—was it my fault?

Serj. My fault! my fault! I see no fault in all this.

Sir Luke. [*Hatching a cry.*] No! why then my dear friend, do you know that I was so unworthy, so profligate, so abandon'd—as to—[*rises*] say no more, the business is done.

Serj. Ay, indeed!

Sir Luke. Oh! fact! there is not the least doubt of the matter; this is no *hear say*, dy'e see, I was by all the while.

Serj. Very pretty! very fine upon my word.

Sir Luke. Was it my fault? what could I do? put yourself in my place; I must have been more, or less, than man to resist.

Serj. Your fault, Sir Luke, no, no—you did but your duty—but as to my wife—

Sir Luke. She's a diabolical fiend, I shall hate her as long as I live.

Serj. And I too.

Sir Luke. Only think of her forcing me, as it were with a sword at my breast, to play such a trick; you, my dear Serjeant, the best, truest friend I have in the world.

[*Weeps.*]

Serj. [*Weeping.*] Dry your tears, dear Sir Luke; I shall ever gratefully acknowledge your confidence in trusting me with the secret—[*taking him forward.*] But I think it might be as well kept from the rest of the world.

Sir

Sir Luke. My dear soul, do you think I would tell it to any mortal but *you*? No, no, not to my brother himself—You are the only man upon earth I wou'd trust.

Serj. Ten thousand thanks, my dear friend! sure there is no comfort, no balsam in life like a friend—but I shall make Madam Circuit remember—

Sir Luke. We neither of us ought to forgive her—were I you, I'd get a divorce.

Serj. So I will—provided you will promise not to marry her after.

Sir Luke. Me! I'll sooner be torn to pieces by wild horses—no, my dear friend, we will retire to my house in the country together, and there, in innocence and simplicity, feeding our pigs and pigeons, like Pyramus and Thisbe, we will live the paragons of the age.

Serj. Agreed; we will be the whole earth to each other; for, as Mr. *Shakespur* says,

*“The friend thou hast and his adoption
try'd*

*“Clasp to thy soul, and quit the world
beside.”—*

Sir Luke. Zouns, here comes Madam Serjeant herself.

Enter Mrs. CIRCUIT.

Mrs. Circ. So, Gentlemen! a sweet tête à tête you have been holding—but I know

it all, not a syllable you have said has been lost.

Sir Luke. Then, I hope you have been well entertained Mrs. Circuit?

Mrs. Circ. And you, you mean spirited, bastardly wretch, to lend a patient ear to his infamous, improbable tales, equally shameful both to you and me.

Serj. How Madam! have you the assurance—

Mrs. Circ. Yes, Sir, the assurance that innocence gives; there is not a soul, I thank heaven, that can lay the least soil, the least spot, on my virtue; nor is there a man on earth but yourself would have sat and silently listen'd to the fictions and fables of this intemperate sot.

Serj. Why to be sure the knight is overtaken a little; very near drunk.

Sir Luke. I hope he believes it is a lie. *[Aside.]*

Mrs. Circ. Do me instant justice on this defamer, this lyar, or never more expect to see me in your house.

Serj. I begin to find out the fraud, this is all a sham of the knight's.

Mrs. Circ. I'll drive this instant to a friend of mine in the Commons, and see if no satisfaction can be had, for blasting the reputation of a woman like me—and hark you Sir, what inducement, what devil could prompt?—

Serj.

Serj. Ay; what devil could prompt—

Sir Luke. Heyday!

Mrs. Circ. But I guess at your motive; you flatter'd yourself, that by marrying Charlot, and discarding of me you should engross all his affections and—

Serj. True, true—stop, my life, let me come at him, a little: hark you, Mr. Knight, I begin to discover that you are a very sad dog.

Sir Luke. Et tu Brute!

Serj. Brute!—you'll find I am not the brute you would have made me believe—I have consider'd both sides of the question.

Sir Luke. Both sides of the question?

Serj. Both: if your story is true, you are a scoundrel to debauch the wife of your friend; and if it is false, you are an infamous lyar.

Sir Luke. Well argued.

Serj. So in both cases, get out of my house.

Sir Luke. Nay, but Serjeant—

Serj. Troop I tell you, and never again enter these walls—you have libelled my wife, and I will see you no more.

Sir Luke. Was there ever such a—

Serj. March! and as to my daughter, I would as soon marry her to a forma pauperis client.

[Exit *Sir Luke.*
Mrs.

Mrs. Circ. Do you consider, Mr. Circuit, where you are pushing the fellow?—That chamber is Charlot's.

Enter Sir LUKE, WOODFORD, CHARLOT, and JACK.

Sir Luke. Heyday! who the deuce have we here?—Pray walk in, my good folks—your servant Miss Charlot; your servant Mr. What-d'ye-call-um.—Mr. Serjeant, you need not trouble yourself to cater for Miss; your family you see can provide for themselves.

Serj. Heyday! What the deuce is all this! Who are you Sir, and how came you here? [*To Woodford.*]

Jack. It was I, father, that brought him.

Serj. How, firrah!

Sir Luke. Well said my young limb of the law.

Jack. Come, let us have none o'your—tho' I brought Mr. Woodford, you could not persuade me to do the same office for you—father, never stir if he did not make me the proffer, if I would let him into the house the night you was at Kingston, of a new pair of silk stockings, and to learn me a minuet.

Sir Luke. Me! I should never have got you to turn out your toes.

Jack.

Jack. Ay, and moreover you made me push out my chest, and do so with my fingers, as if I was taking two pinches of snuff.

Sir Luke. You see, Mr. Serjeant, what a fondness, I have for every twig of your family.

Serj. I shall thank *you* hereafter—but from you, Charlot, I expected other guess—

Charl. When, Sir, you hear this whole matter explain'd, you will acquit. I am sure.

Woodf. Indeed, Sir, I am wholly to blame; my being here was as much a surprize upon Miss Charlot as—

Serj. But now you are here, pray what's your business?

Jack. O! father, I can acquaint you with that—he wanted me to bring a love letter to Charlot, so I told him he might bring it himself, for that I would not do any such thing for never so much, for fear of offending of you.

Serj. You mended the matter indeed—but after all, who, and what are you?

Jack. It's the young gentleman that lives over our heads, to whom Mr. Fairplay is guardian.

Serj. Who, Woodford?

Jack. The same.

Serj.

Serj. And are you, young man in a situation to think of a wife?

Woodf. I am flattered, Sir, that as *justice* is with me, I shall one day have no contemptible fortune to throw at her feet.

Serj. *Justice* is! What signifies justice?—Is the *law* with you, you fool?

Woodf. With your help, Sir, I should hope for their *union*, upon this occasion at least.

Serj. Well, Sir, I shall re-consider your papers, and, if there are probable grounds, I may be induc'd to hear your propofals.

Woodf. Nay then, Sir, the recovering my paternal possessions makes me anxious indeed.—Could I hope that the young lady's good wish would attend me?

Charl. I have a father, and can have no will of my own.

Sir Luke. So then it seems poor Pil Garlick here is discarded at once.

Serj. Why, could you have the impudence, after what has happen'd, to hope that——

Mrs. Circ. He has given wonderful proofs of his modesty.

Sir Luke. Be quiet, Mrs. Circuit.—Come, good folks, I will set all matters to rights in a minute; and first, Mr. Serjeant, it becomes

becomes me to tell you, that I never intended to marry your daughter.

Serj. How! never!

Sir Luke. Never. She is a fine girl I allow; but would it now, Mr. Serjeant, have been honest in me, to have robb'd the whole sex of my person, and confin'd my favors to her?

Serj. How!

Sir Luke. No! I was struck with the immorality of the thing; and therefore to make it impossible that you should ever give me your daughter, I invented the story I told you concerning Mrs. Circuit and me.

Serj. How!

Sir Luke. Truth, upon my honour.—Your wife there will tell you the whole was a lye.

Serj. Nay, then indeed.—But with what face can I look up to my dear? I have injur'd her beyond the hopes of forgiveness.—Wou'd you, lovee, but pass an act of oblivion—

Sir Luke. See me here prostrate to implore your clemency in behalf of my friend.

Mrs. Circ. Of that I can't determine directly.—But as you seem to have some sense of your guilt, I shall grant you a reprieve

prieve for the present; which contrition and amendment may, perhaps, in time swell into a pardon.

But if again offending you are caught,

Serj. Then let me suffer, dearee, as I ought.

F I N I S.

Dramatis Personae.

THE ENGLISH MERCHANT.

THE

OF WILLIAM LA FRANCE,

ENGLISH MERCHANT,

OF THE

A COMEDY,

BY GEORGE COLMAN.

Lady ALTON, Mrs. GODMAN, AMELIA, Miss MARY, and others.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED, A DEDICATION TO THE LADY ALTON, BY THE AUTHOR.

VOL. II.

R

Sp

please for the present, which contains
and other, which may, perhaps, in this well
into a garden.

But if
I say, I am let me tell, deuce, as I
ought.

Dramatis Personae.

MEN.

Lord FALBRIDGE, OWEN,

Sir WILLIAM La FRANCE,
DOUGLAS,

FREEPORT, OFFICER,

SPATTER, SERVANTS, &c.

WOMEN.

Lady ALTON, Mrs. GOODMAN,

AMELIA, MOLLY.

SCENE LONDON.

**THE
ENGLISH MERCHANT.**

A C T I.

SCENE *A Room in Mrs. Goodman's House.*

Enter MOLLY, struggling with SPATTER.

Molly. **B**E quiet, Mr. Spatter! let me alone! Pray now, Sir! It is a strange thing a body can't go about the house without being pester'd with your impertinence—Why sure!

Spat. Introduce me to your mistress then—come, there's a good girl!—and I will teaze you no longer.

Molly. Indeed I shan't—Introduce you to my lady! for what, pray?

Spat. Oh! for a thousand things. To laugh, to chat, to take a dish of tea, to—

Molly. You drink tea with my lady! I should not have thought of that—On what acquaintance?

V O L. II. **R** *Spat.*

Spat. The most agreeable in the world, child! a new acquaintance.

Molly. Indeed you mistake yourself mightily—you are not a proper acquaintance for a person of her quality, I assure you, Sir!

Spat. Why, what quality is she, then?

Molly. Much too high quality for your acquaintance, I promise you. What! a poet-man! that sits write, write, write, all day long, scribbling a pack of nonsense for the news-papers!—You're fit for nothing above a chambermaid.

Spat. That's as much as to say, that you think me just fit for you. Eh, child!

Molly. No, indeed, not I, Sir. Neither my lady nor I will have any thing to say to you.

Spat. Your mistress and you both give yourselves a great many airs, my dear. Your poverty, I think, might pull down your pride.

Molly. What does the fellow mean by poverty?

Spat. I mean that you are starving.

Molly. Oh the slanderous monster! We! Starving! Who told you so? I'd have you to know, Sir, my lady has a very great fortune.

Spat. So 'tis a sign, by her way of life and appearance,

Molly.

Molly. Well; she lives privately, indeed, because she loves retirement; she goes plain, because she hates dress; she keeps no table, because she is an enemy to luxury.—In short, my lady is as rich as a Jew, and you are an impertinent coxcomb.

Spat. Come, come! I know more of your mistress than you imagine.

Molly. And what do you know of her?

Spat. Oh, I know what I know.

Molly. Well! [alarmed.]

Spat. I know who she is, and where she came from; I am very well acquainted with her family, and know her whole history.

Molly. How can that be?

Spat. Very easily—I have correspondence every where. As private as she may think herself, it is not the first time that I have seen or heard of Amelia.

Molly. Oh gracious heaven! as sure as I am alive this man will discover us. [apart.] Mr. Spatter, my dear Mr. Spatter, if you know any thing, sure you would not be so cruel as to betray us!

Spat. My dear Mr. Spatter! O ho! I have guess'd right—there is something then.

Molly. No, Sir, there is nothing at all; nothing that signifies to you or any body else.

Spat. Well, well, I'll say nothing; but then you must—

Molly. What?

Spat. Come; kiss me, huffy!

Molly. I shall kiss you, indeed.

Spat. And you'll introduce me to your mistress.

Molly. Not I, I promise you.

Spat. Nay, no mysteries between you and me, child! Come; here's the key to all locks, the clue to every maze, and the discloser of all secrets; money, child! Here! take this purse; you see I know something; tell me the rest, and I have the fellow to it in my pocket.

Molly. Ha, ha, ha! poor Mr. Spatter! Where could you get all this money, I wonder! Not by your poetries, I believe. But what signifies telling you any thing, when you are acquainted with our whole history already? You have correspondence every where, you know. There, Sir! take up your filthy purse again, and remember that I scorn to be obliged to any body but my mistress.

Spat. There's impudence for you! when to my certain knowledge your mistress has not a guinea in the world; you live in continual fear of being discovered; and you will both be utterly undone in a fortnight, unless Lord Falbridge should prevent it, by taking Amelia under his protection. You understand me, child.

Molly.

Molly. You scandalous wretch! Did you ever hear such a monster? I won't stay a moment longer with him—But you are quite mistaken about me and my mistress, I assure you, Sir. We are in the best circumstances in the world; we have nothing to fear; and we don't care a farthing for you.—So your servant, Mr. Poet! [*Exit.*

SPATTER alone.

Your servant, Mrs. Pert! “We are in the best circumstances in the world.” Ay, that is as much as to say, they are in the utmost distress. “We have nothing to fear.”—That is, they are frightened out of their wits—“And we don't care a farthing for you.”—Meaning, that they will take all the care in their power, that I shall not find them out.—But I may be too hard for you yet, young gentlewoman! I have earned but a poor livelihood by mere scandal and abuse; but if I could once arrive at doing a little substantial mischief, I should make my fortune.

Enter Mrs. GOODMAN.

Oh! your servant, Mrs. Goodman! Your's is the most unfociable lodging-house in town. So many ladies, and only one gentleman! and you won't take the least notice of him.

Mrs. Good. How so, Mr. Spatter?

Spat. Why, did not you promise to introduce me to Amelia?

Mrs. Good. To tell you the plain truth, Mr. Spatter, she don't like you. And, indeed, I don't know how it is, but you make yourself a great many enemies.

Spat. Yes; I believe I do raise a little envy.

Mrs. Good. Indeed you are mistaken, Sir. As you are a lodger of mine, it makes me quite uneasy to hear what the world says of you. How do you contrive to make so many enemies, Mr. Spatter?

Spat. Because I have merit, Mrs. Goodman.

Mrs. Good. May be so; but nobody will allow it but yourself. They say that you set up for a wit, indeed; but that you deal in nothing but scandal, and think of nothing but mischief.

Spat. I do speak ill of the men sometimes, to be sure; but then I have a great regard for women—provided they are handsome: and that I may give you a proof of it, introduce me to Amelia.

Mrs. Good. You must excuse me; she and you would be the worst company in the world; for she never speaks too well of herself, nor the least ill of any body else. And then her virtue—

Spat.

Spat. Pooh, pooh, she speaks ill of nobody, because she knows nobody; and as for her virtue, ha, ha!

Mrs. Good. You don't believe much in that, I suppose?

Spat. I have not over-much faith, Mrs. Goodman. Lord Falbridge, perhaps, may give a better account of it.

Mrs. Good. Lord Falbridge can say nothing but what would be extremely to her honour, I assure you, Sir. [*Spatter laughs.*] Well, well, you may laugh, but it is very true.

Spat. Oh, I don't doubt it; but you don't tell the whole truth, Mrs. Goodman. When any of your friends or acquaintance sit for their pictures, you draw a very flattering likeness. All characters have their dark side, and if they have but one eye, you give them in *profile*. Your great friend, Mr. Freeport, for instance, whom you are always praising for his benevolent actions—

Mrs. Good. He is benevolence itself, Sir.

Spat. Yes, and grossness itself too. I remember him these many years. He always cancels an obligation by the manner of conferring it; and does you a favour, as if he were going to knock you down.

Mrs. Good. A truce with your satire, good Mr. Spatter! Mr. Freeport is my best friend; I owe him every thing; and I can't endure the slightest reflection on his character. Be-

sides, he can have given no offence to Lady Alton, whatever may be the case with Amelia.

Spat. Lady Alton! she is a particular friend of mine to be sure; but between you and me, Mrs. Goodman, a more ridiculous character than any you have mentioned. A *bel esprit* forsooth! and as vain of her beauty as learning, without any great portion of either. A fourth Grace, and a tenth Muse! who fancies herself enamour'd of Lord Falbridge, because she would be proud of such a conquest; and has lately bestowed some marks of distinction on me, because she thinks it will give her credit among persons of letters.

Mrs. Good. Nay, if you can't spare your own friends, I don't wonder at your attacking mine—and so, Sir, your humble servant.—But stay! here's a post-chaise stopp'd at our door; and here comes a servant with a portmanteau! 'Tis the gentleman for whom my first floor was taken, I suppose.

Spat. Very likely: well, you will introduce me to him at least, Mrs. Goodman.

Enter a servant with a portmanteau—Sir WILLIAM DOUGLAS following.

Sir W. You are Mrs. Goodman, I suppose, Madam?

Mrs. Good. At your service, Sir.

Sir

Sir W. Mr. Owen, I believe, has secured apartments here?

Mrs. Good. He has, Sir.

Sir W. They are for me, Madam—Have you any other lodgers?

Mrs. Good. Only that gentleman, Sir; and a young lady—

Spat. Of great beauty and virtue. Eh, Mrs. Goodman?

Mrs. Good. She has both, Sir; but you will see very little of her, for she lives in the most retired manner in the world.

Sir W. Her youth and beauty are matter of great indifference to me; for I shall be as much a recluse as herself.—Are there any news at present stirring in London?

Mrs. Good. Mr. Spatter can inform you, Sir, for he deals in news. In the mean while, I'll prepare your apartments.

[Exit, followed by the servant.]

Manent Sir WILLIAM DOUGLAS, and SPATTER; Sir WILLIAM walks up and down without taking notice of SPATTER.

Spat. This must be a man of quality by his ill manners. I'll speak to him *[aside.]* *[to Sir William]* Will your Lordship give me leave—

Sir W. Lordship! I am no Lord, Sir, and must beg not to be honoured with the name.

Spat.

Spat. It is a kind of mistake, that cannot displease at least.

Sir W. I don't know that. None but a fool would be vain of a title, if he had one; and none but an impostor would assume a title, to which he has no right.

Spat. Oh, you're of the House of Commons then, a member of parliament, and are come up to town to attend the sessions, I suppose, Sir?

Sir W. No matter what I am, Sir.

Spat. Nay, no offence, I hope, Sir. All I meant was to do you honour. Being concerned in two evening-posts and one morning-paper, I was willing to know the proper manner of announcing your arrival.

Sir W. You have connections with the press then, it seems, Sir?

Spat. Yes, Sir; I am an humble retainer to the Muses, an author. I compose pamphlets on all subjects, compile magazines, and do news-papers.

Sir W. Do news-papers! What do you mean by that, Sir?

Spat. That is, Sir, I collect the articles of news from the other papers and make new ones for the postscript, translate the mails, write occasional letters from Cato and Theatricus, and give fictitious answers to supposed correspondents.

Sir W. A very ingenious as well as honourable employment, I must confess, Sir.

Spat.

Spat. Some little genius is requisite, to be sure. Now, Sir, if I can be of any use to you—if you have any friend to be praised, or any enemy to be abused; any author to cry up, or minister to run down; my pen and talents are entirely at your service.

Sir W. I am much obliged to you, Sir, but at present I have not the least occasion for either. In return for your genteel offers, give me leave to trouble you with one piece of advice. When you deal in private scandal, have a care of the cudgel; and when you meddle with publick matters, beware of the pillory?

Spat. How, Sir! are you no friend to literature? Are you an enemy to the liberty of the press?

Sir W. I have the greatest respect for both; but railing is the disgrace of letters, and personal abuse the scandal of freedom: foul-mouthed criticks, are in general disappointed authors; and they, who are the loudest against ministers, only mean to be paid for their silence.

Spat. That may be sometimes, Sir; but give me leave to ask you—

Sir W. Do not ask me at present, Sir! I see a particular friend of mine coming this way, and I must beg you to withdraw!

Spat. Withdraw, Sir! first of all, allow me to—

Sir

Sir W. Nay, no reply! we must be in private. [*thrusting out Spatter.*]

Sir WILLIAM DOUGLAS alone.

What a wretch! as contemptible as mischievous. Our generous mastiffs fly at men from an instinct of courage; but this fellow's attacks proceed from an instinct of baseness—But here comes the faithful Owen, with as many good qualities as that execrable fellow seems to have bad ones.

Enter OWEN.

Well, Owen; I am safe arrived you see.

Owen. Ah, Sir! would to heaven you were as safe returned again! Have a care of betraying yourself to be Sir William Douglas!—During your stay here, your name is Ford, remember.

Sir W. I shall take care—But tell me your news—What have you done since your arrival? Have you heard any thing of my daughter? Have you seen Lord Brumpton? Has he any hope of obtaining my pardon?

Owen. He had, Sir.

Sir W. And what can have destroyed it then?

Owen. My Lord Brumpton is dead, Sir.

Sir W. Dead!

Owen. I saw him within this week in apparent good health; he promised to exert his

his whole interest in your favour: by his own appointment I went to wait on him yesterday noon, when I was stunned with the news of his having died suddenly the evening before.

Sir W. My Lord Brumpton dead! the only friend I had remaining in England; the only person, on whose intercession I relied for my pardon. Cruel fortune! I have now no hope but to find my daughter. Tell me, Owen; have you been able to hear any tidings of her?

Owen. Alas, Sir, none that are satisfactory. On the death of Mr. Andrews, in whose care you left her, being cruelly abandoned by the relation who succeeded to the estate, she left the country some months ago, and has not since been heard of.

Sir W. Unhappy there too! When will the measure of my misfortunes be full? When will the malice of my fate be satisfied? Proscribed, condemned, attainted, alas, but too justly! I have lost my rank, my estate, my wife, my son, and all my family. One only daughter remains. Perhaps a wretched wanderer like myself, perhaps in the extremest indigence, perhaps dishonoured—Ha! that thought distracts me.

Owen. My dear master, have patience! Do not be ingenious to torment yourself,
but

but consult your safety, and prepare for your departure.

Sir W. No, Owen. Hearing, providentially, of the death of my friend Andrews, paternal care and tenderness drew me hither; and I will not quit the kingdom till I learn something of my child, my dear Amelia, whom I left a tender innocent in the arms of the best of women twenty years ago. Her sex demands protection; and she is now of an age, in which she is more exposed to misfortunes than even in helpless infancy.

Owen. Be advised; depart, and leave that care to me. Consider; your life is now at stake.

Sir W. My life has been too miserable to render me very solicitous for its preservation—But the complection of the times is changed; the very name of the party, in which I was unhappily engaged, is extinguished, and the whole nation is unanimously devoted to the throne. Disloyalty and insurrection are now no more, and the sword of justice is suffered to sleep. If I can find my child, and find her worthy of me, I will fly with her to take refuge in some foreign country; if I am discovered in the search, I have still some hopes of mercy.

Owen. Heaven grant your hopes may be well founded!

Sir

Sir W. Come, Owen! let us behave at least with fortitude in our adversity! Follow me to my apartment, and let us consult what measures we shall take in searching for Amelia. [*Excunt.*

Scene changes to AMELIA'S apartment.

AMELIA and MOLLY.

Amel. Poor Molly! to be teased with that odious fellow, Spatter!

Molly. But, Madam, Mr. Spatter says he is acquainted with your whole history.

Amel. Mere pretence, in order to render himself formidable. Be on your guard against him, my dear Molly; and remember to conceal my misery from him and all the world. I can bear poverty, but am not proof against insult and contempt.

Molly. Ah, my dear mistress, it is to no purpose to endeavour to hide it from the world. They will see poverty in my looks. As for you, you can live upon the air; the greatness of your soul seems to support you; but lack-a-day, I shall grow thinner and thinner every day of my life.

Amel. I can support my own distress, but yours touches me to the soul. Poor Molly! the labour of my hands shall feed and cloath you—Here! dispose of this embroidery to the best advantage; what was formerly my amusement, must now become the means of

of our subsistence. Let us be obliged to nobody, but owe our support to industry and virtue.

Molly. You're an angel: let me kiss those dear hands that have worked this precious embroidery; let me bathe them with my tears! You're an angel upon earth. I had rather starve in your service, than live with a princess. What can I do to comfort you?

Amel. Thou faithful creature—only continue to be secret: you know my real character; you know I am in the utmost distress: I have opened my heart to you, but you will plant a dagger there if you betray me to the world.

Molly. Ah, my dear mistress, how should I betray you! I go no where, I converse with nobody but yourself and Mrs. Goodman: besides, the world is very indifferent about other people's misfortunes.

Amel. The world is indifferent, it is true; but it is curious, and takes a cruel pleasure in tearing open the wounds of the unfortunate——

Enter Mrs. GOODMAN.

Mrs. Goodman!

Mrs. Good. Excuse me, Madam: I took the liberty of waiting on you to receive your commands. 'Tis now near three o'clock. You have provided nothing for dinner,

dinner, and have scarce taken any refreshment these three days.

Amel. I have been indisposed.

Mrs. Good. I am afraid you are more than indisposed — You are unhappy — Pardon me! but I cannot help thinking that your fortune is unequal to your appearance.

Amel. Why should you think so! You never heard me complain of my fortune.

Mrs. Good. No, but I have too much reason to believe it is inferior to your merit.

Amel. Indeed, you flatter me.

Mrs. Good. Come, come; you must not indulge this melancholy. I have a new lodger, an elderly gentleman, just arrived, who does me the honour to partake of my dinner; and I must have your company too. He seems to be in trouble, as well as you. You must meet; two persons in affliction may perhaps become a consolation to each other. Come, let us take some care of you.

Amel. Be assured, Mrs. Goodman, I am much obliged to you for your attention to me; but I want nothing.

Mrs. Good. Dear Madam! you say you want nothing, and you are in want of every thing.

Enter Servant.

Serv. [to *Mrs. Good.*] Lady Alton, Madam, sends her compliments, and will wait upon you after dinner.

Mrs. Good. Very well; my best respects to her Ladyship, and I shall be ready to attend her. [*Exit Servant.*] There, there is one cause of your uneasiness! Lady Alton's visit is on your account. She thinks you have robbed her of Lord Falbridge's affections, and that is the occasion of her honouring me with her company.

Amel. Lord Falbridge's affections!

Mrs. Good. Ah! my dear Amelia, you don't know your power over his heart. You have reconciled it to virtue—But come! let me prevail on you to come with me to dinner.

Amel. You must excuse me.

Mrs. Good. Well, well, then I'll send you something to your own apartment. If you have any other commands, pray honour me with them, for I would fain oblige you, if I knew how it were in my power. [*Exit.*

Manent AMELIA and MOLLY.

Amel. What an amiable woman! If it had not been for her apparent benevolence and goodness of heart, I should have left the house on Mr. Spatter's coming to lodge in it.

Molly.

Molly. Lady Alton, it seems, recommended him as a lodger here; so he can be no friend of yours on that account; for to be sure she owes you no good will on account of my Lord Falbridge.

Amel. No more of Lord Falbridge, I beseech you, Molly. How can you persist in mentioning him, when you know that, presuming on my situation, he has dared to affront me with dishonourable proposals?

Molly. Ah, Madam, but he sorely repents it, I promise you, and would give his whole estate for an opportunity of seeing you once more, and getting into your good graces again.

Amel. No; his ungenerous conduct has thrown him as much below me, as my condition had placed me beneath him. He imagined he had a right to insult my distress; but I will teach him to think it respectable.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

S C E N E *An Apartment at Mrs.
GOODMAN'S.**Enter Lady ALTON and SPATTER.*

Spat. BUT you won't hear me, Madam!
L. Alt. I have heard too much,
 Sir! This wandering *incognita* a woman of
 virtue! I have no patience.

Spat. Mrs. Goodman pretends to be con-
 vinced of her being a person of honour.

L. Alt. A person of honour, and openly
 receive visits from men! seduce Lord Fal-
 bridge! No, no: reserve this character for
 your next novel, Mr. Spatter! it is an
 affront to my understanding. I begin to
 suspect you have betrayed me; you have
 gone over to the adverse party, and are in
 the conspiracy to abuse me.

Spat. I, Madam! Neither her beauty,
 nor her virtue—

L. Alt. Her beauty! her virtue! Why,
 thou wretch, thou grub of literature, whom
 I as a patroness of learning and encourager
 of men of letters, willing to blow the dead
 coal of genius, fondly took under my pro-
 tection

rection, do you remember what I have done for you?

Spat. With the utmost gratitude, Madam.

L. Alt. Did not I draw you out of the garret, where you daily spun out your flimsy brain to catch the town flies in your cobweb dissertations? Did not I introduce you to Lord Dapperwit, the Apollo of the age? And did not you dedicate your silly volume of poems on several occasions to him? Did not I put you into the list of my visitors, and order my porter to admit you at dinner-time? Did not I write the only scene in your execrable farce, which the audience vouchsafed an hearing? And did not my female friend, Mrs. Melpomene, furnish you with Greek and Latin mottoes for your twopenny essays?

Spat. I acknowledge all your Ladyship's goodness to me. I have done every thing in my power to shew my gratitude, and fulfill your Ladyship's commands.

L. Alt. Words, words, Mr. Spatter! You have been witness of Lord Falbridge's inconstancy: A perfidious man! False as Phaon to Sappho, or Jason to Medea! You have seen him desert me for a wretched vagabond; you have seen me abandoned like Calypso, without making a single effort to recall my faithless Ulysses from the Siren that has lured him from me.

Spat. Be calm but one moment, Madam, and I'll—

L. Alt. Bid the sea be calm, when the winds are let loose upon it. I have reason to be enraged. I placed you in genteel apartments in this house, merely to plant you as a spy; and what have you done for me? Have you employed your correspondence to any purpose? or discovered the real character of this infamous woman, this insolent Amelia?

Spat. I have taken every possible method to detect her. I have watched Amelia herself like a bailiff, or a Duenna; I have overheard private conversations; have sounded the landlady; tampered with the servants; opened letters; and intercepted messages.

L. Alt. Good creature! my best Spatter! And what? what have you discovered?

Spat. That Amelia is a native of Scotland; that her surname *Walton* is probably not real, but assumed; and that she earnestly wishes to conceal both the place of her birth and her family.

L. Alt. And is that all?

Spat. All that I have been able to learn as yet, Madam.

L. Alt. Wretch! of what service have you been then? Are these your boasted talents? When we want to unravel an ambiguous character, you have made out that she wishes to lie concealed; and when we wish

wish to know who she is, you have just discovered that she is a native of Scotland.

Spat. And yet if you will give me leave, Madam, I think I could convince you that these discoveries, blind and unsatisfactory as they may appear to you at first, are of no small consequence:

L. Alt. Of what consequence can they possibly be to me, man?

Spat. I'll tell you, Madam. It is a rule in politicks, when we discover something, to add something more. Something added to something, makes a good deal; upon this basis I have formed a syllogism.

L. Alt. What does the pedant mean? A syllogism!

Spat. Yes, a syllogism: as for example; Any person who is a native of Scotland, and wishes to be concealed, must be an enemy to the government. Amelia is a native of Scotland, and wishes to be concealed. *Ergo*, Amelia is an enemy to the government.

L. Alt. Excellent! admirable logick! but I wish we could prove it to be truth.

Spat. I would not lay a wager of the truth of it; but I would swear it.

L. Alt. What, on a proper occasion, and in a proper place, my good Spatter?

Spat. Willingly; we must make use of what we know, and even of what we don't know. Truth is of a dry and simple nature,

and stands in need of some little ornament. A lie, indeed, is infamous; but fiction, your Ladyship, who deals in poetry, knows is beautiful.

L. Alt. But the substance of your fiction, Spatter?

Spat. I will lodge an information that the father of Amelia is a disaffected person, and has sent her to London for treasonable purposes: nay, I can upon occasion even suppose the father himself to be in London: in consequence of which you will probably recover Lord Falbridge, and Amelia will be committed to prison.

L. Alt. You have given me new life. I took you for a mere stainer of paper; but I have found you a Machiavel.—I hear somebody coming.—Mrs. Goodman has undertaken to send Amelia hither. Ha! she's here—Away, Spatter, and wait for me at my house: you must dine with me; and after dinner, like true politicians, we will settle our plan of operations over our coffee. Away, away this instant!

[*Exit Spatter.*]

Lady ALTON alone.

A convenient engine this Mr. Spatter: the most impudent thorough-paced knave in the three kingdoms! with the heart of *Zoilus*, the pen of *Mævius*, and the tongue of *Thersites*. I was sure he would stick at
nothing

nothing. The writings of authors are publick advertisements of their qualifications; and when they profess to live upon scandal, it is as much as to say, that they are ready for every other dirty work, in which we chuse to employ them.—But now for Amelia: if she proves tractable, I may forego the use of this villain, who almost makes me hate my triumph, and be ashamed of my revenge.

Enter AMELIA.

Amel. Mrs. Goodman has informed me that your Ladyship has desired to see me: I wait your commands, Madam.

L. Alt. Look you, young woman: I am sensible how much it is beneath a person of my rank to parley with one of your condition. For once, however, I am content to wave all ceremony; and if you behave as you ought to do, you have nothing to fear, child.

Amel. I hope I have never behaved otherwise than as I ought to do, Madam.

L. Alt. Yes; you have received the visits of Lord Falbridge; you have endeavoured to estrange his affections from me: but, if you encourage him in his infidelity to me, tremble for the consequence: be advised, or you are ruined.

Amel. I am conscious of no guilt, and know no fear, Madam.

L. Alt.

L. Alt. Come, come, Mrs. Amelia; this high strain is out of character with me. Act over your Clelia, and Cleopatra, and Cassandra, at a proper time; and let me talk in the stile of nature and common sense to you. You have no Lord Falbridge, no weak young nobleman to impose upon at present.

Amel. To impose upon! I scorn the imputation, and am sorry to find that your Ladyship came hither, merely to indulge yourself in the cruel pleasure of insulting one of the unhappiest of her sex.

[weeping.]
L. Alt. You are mistaken; I came hither to concert measures for your happiness, to assist your poverty, and relieve your distress. Leave this house; leave London; I will provide you a retirement in the country, and supply all your wants. Only renounce all thoughts of Lord Falbridge, and never let him know the place of your retreat.

Amel. Lord Falbridge! What is Lord Falbridge to me, Madam?

L. Alt. To convince me you have no commerce with him, accept of my proposals.

Amel. No, Madam; the favours which you intend me, I could not receive without blushing. I have no wants but what I can supply myself; no distresses which your
Lady-

Ladyship can relieve; and I will seek no refuge but in my own virtue.

L. Alt. Your virtue! Ridiculous! If you are a woman of virtue, what is the meaning of all this mystery? Who are you! What are you? Who will vouch for your character?

Amel. It wants no vouchers; nor will I suffer myself to be arraigned like a criminal, till I know by what authority you take upon you to act as my judge.

L. Alt. Matchless confidence! Yes, yes, it is too plain; I see you are the very creature I took you for; a mere adventurer: some strolling princess, that are perhaps more frugal of your favours than the rest of your sisterhood, merely to enhance the price of them.

Amel. Hold, Madam! This opprobrious language is more injurious to your own honour than to mine. I see the violence of your temper, and will leave you. But you may one day know that my birth is equal to your own; my heart is perhaps more generous; and whatever may be my situation, I scorn to be dependant on any body; much less on one, who has so mean an opinion of me, and who considers me as her rival.

[Exit.

Lady

Lady ALTON alone.

Her rival! Unparalleled insolence! An open avowal of her competition with me! Yes; I see Spatter must be employed. Her rival! I shall burst with indignation.

Enter Mrs. GOODMAN.

L. Alt. Mrs. Goodman! where is Mr. Spatter?

Mrs. Good. He went out the moment he left your Ladyship. But you seem disordered; shall I get you some hartshorn, Madam?

L. Alt. Some poison.—Rival! I shall choak with rage.—You shall hear from me. You, and your Amelia. You have abused me; you have conspired against my peace; and be assured you shall suffer for it.

[*Exit.*

Mrs. GOODMAN alone.

What a violent woman! Her passion makes her forget what is due to her sex and quality. Ha! Mr. Freeport!

Enter FREEPORT.

My best friend! Welcome to London! When did you arrive from Lisbon?

Free. But last night.

Mrs. Good. I hope you have had a pleasant voyage?

Free.

Free. A good trading voyage—I have got money, but I have got the spleen too.—Have you any news in town?

Mrs. Good. None at all, Sir.

Free. So much the better. The less news, the less nonsense.—But what strange lady have you had here? I met her as I was coming up: she rushed by like a fury, and almost swept me down stairs again with the wind of her hoop-petticoat.

Mrs. Good. Ah! jealousy! Jealousy is a terrible passion; especially in a woman's breast, Mr. Freeport.

Free. Jealousy! Why, she is not jealous of you, Mrs. Goodman?

Mrs. Good. No; but of a lodger of mine.

Free. Have you any new lodgers since I left you?

Mrs. Good. Two or three, Sir; the last arrived but to-day; an elderly gentleman, who will see no company.

Free. He's in the right. Three parts in four of mankind are knaves or fools; and the fourth part live by themselves.—But who are your other lodgers?

Mrs. Good. An author and a lady.

Free. I hate authors: Who is the lady?

Mrs. Good. She calls herself Amelia Walton; but I believe that name is not her real one.

Free. Not her real one! Why, sure she is a woman of character?

Mrs.

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Free. Not her real one! Why, sure she is a woman of character?

Mrs.

Mrs. Good. A woman of character! She is an angel. She is most miserably poor; and yet haughty to an excess.

Free. Pride and poverty! A sad composition, Mrs. Goodman.

Mrs. Good. No, Sir; her pride is one of her greatest virtues: it consists in depriving herself of almost all necessaries, and concealing it from the world. Tho' every action speaks her to be a woman of birth and education, she lives upon the work of her own hands without murmur or complaint. I make use of a thousand stratagems to assist her against her will; I prevail on her to keep the money due for rent for her support, and furnish her with every thing she wants at half its prime cost; but if she perceives or suspects these little artifices, she takes it almost as ill as if I had attempted to defraud her. In short, Sir, her unshaken virtue and greatness of soul under misfortunes, make me consider her as a prodigy, and often draw tears of pity and admiration from me.

Free. Ah! women's tears lie very near their eyes. I never cried in my life; and yet I can feel too; I can admire, I can esteem, but what signifies whimpering? Hark ye, Mrs. Goodman! This is a very extraordinary account you give of this young woman; you have raised my curiosity, and I'll go and see this lodger of yours;

yours; I am rather out of spirits, and it will serve to amuse me.

Mrs. Good. Oh, Sir, you can't see her; she neither pays visits nor receives them, but lives in the most retired manner in the world.

Free. So much the better. I love retirement as well as she. Where are her apartments?

Mrs. Good. On this very floor, on the other side of the staircase.

Free. I'll go and see her immediately.

Mrs. Good. Indeed you can't, Sir. It is impossible.

Free. Impossible! where is the impossibility of going into a room? Come along!

Mrs. Good. For heaven's sake, Mr. Freeport!

Free. Pshaw! I have no time to lose, I have business half an hour hence.

Mrs. Good. But won't it be rather indelicate, Sir? Let me prepare her first!

Free. Prepare her—With all my heart—But remember that I am a man of business, Mrs. Goodman, and have no time to waste in ceremony and compliment. [*Exeunt.*]

AMELIA'S Apartment.

AMELIA at work, and MOLLY.

Amel. No, Polly! If Lord Falbridge comes again, I am resolved not to see him.

Molly.

Mrs. Good. A woman of character is an angel. She is most miserable and yet haughty to an excess.

Free. Pride and poverty! A fiction, Mrs. Goodman.

Mrs. Good. No, Sir; her pride is her greatest virtues: it consists in her being self-sufficient of almost all necessaries, concealing it from the world. The action speaks her to be a woman of sense and education, she lives upon the labour of her own hands without murmur or complaint. I make use of a thousand stratagems to assist her against her will; I persuade her to keep the money due for her support, and furnish her with everything she wants at half its price; if she perceives or suspects these artifices, she takes it almost as ill as if attempted to defraud her. In her unshaken virtue and great patience under misfortunes, make me regard her as a prodigy, and often draw respect and admiration from me.

Free. Ah! women's eyes. I never yet I can feel too much respect for them, but

I never saw the
surprised at his

Mrs. Goodman

[*Mrs. Goodman*

y! that's right,

now who I am,

f easy.

does not chuse

her no trouble;

with you; let

we will have

four.—In the

is lady; I have

business, Sir—

you I have very

down, and let's

not have followed

Exit Mrs. Goodman.

oddest man I ever saw

as I see you are a par-

e of Mrs. Goodman—

your commands for me,

[*they sit.*

what, young woman; I

d will tell you my mind

T

Molly. Indeed, Madam, he loves you above all the world; I am sure of it; and I verily believe he will run mad, if you don't hear what he has to say for himself.

Amel. Speak no more of him.

Enter Mrs. GOODMAN.

Mrs. Goodman!

Mrs. Good. Pardon me, Madam! Here is a gentleman of my acquaintance begs you would give him leave to speak with you.

Amel. A gentleman! who is he?

Mrs. Good. His name is Freeport, Madam. He has a few particularities; but he is the best-hearted man in the world. Pray let him come in, Madam!

Amel. By no means; you know I receive visits from nobody.

Enter FREEPORT.

Bless me! he's here. This is very extraordinary indeed, Mrs. Goodman.

Free. Don't disturb yourself, young woman; don't disturb yourself!

Molly. Mighty free and easy, methinks!

Amel. Excuse me, Sir; I am not used to receive visits from persons entirely unknown.

Free. Unknown! There is not a man in all London better known than I am. I am a merchant, my name is Freeport; Freeport of Crutched-Friars; enquire upon 'Change!

Amel.

Amel. Mrs. Goodman! I never saw the gentleman before. I am surpris'd at his coming here.

Free. Pooh! Prithee; Mrs. Goodman knows me well enough. [*Mrs. Goodman talks apart with Amelia.*] Ay! that's right, Mrs. Goodman. Let her know who I am, and tell her to make herself easy.

Mrs. Good. But the lady does not chuse we should trouble her, Sir.

Free. Trouble her? I'll give her no trouble; I came to drink a dish of tea with you; let your maid get it ready, and we will have it here instead of your parlour.—In the mean time I will talk with this lady; I have something to say to her.

Amel. If you had any business, Sir—

Free. Business! I tell you I have very particular business; so sit down, and let's have the tea.

Mrs. Good. You shou'd not have followed me so soon, Sir.

Free. Pooh, prithee!

[*Exit Mrs. Goodman.*]

Molly. This is the oddest man I ever saw in my life.

Amel. Well, Sir, as I see you are a particular acquaintance of Mrs. Goodman—But pray what are your commands for me, Sir! [*they sit.*]

Free. I tell you what, young woman; I am a plain man, and will tell you my mind

in an instant. I am told that you are one of the best women in the world; very virtuous, and very poor; I like you for that: but they say you are excessively proud too; now I don't like you for that, Madam.

Molly. Free and easy still, I see.

Amel. And pray, Sir, who told you so?

Free. Mrs. Goodman.

Amel. She has deceived you, Sir; not in regard to my pride, perhaps, for there is a certain right pride which every body, especially women, ought to possess! and as to virtue, it is no more than my duty; but as to poverty, I disclaim it; they who want nothing, cannot be said to be poor.

Free. It is no such thing: you don't speak the truth; and that is worse than being proud. I know very well that you are as poor as Job, that you are in want of common necessaries, and don't make a good meal above once in a fortnight.

Molly. My mistress fasts for her health, Sir.

Free. Hold your tongue, hussy! what, are you proud too?

Molly. Lord, what a strange man!

Free. But however, Madam, proud or not proud, does not signify two-pence.—Hark ye, young woman! it is a rule with me, as it ought to be with every good Christian, to give a tenth part of my fortune in charity. In the account of my profits

profits there stands at present the sum of two thousand pounds on the credit side of my books; so that I am two hundred pounds in arrear. This I look upon as a debt due from my fortune to your poverty—Yes, your poverty I say, so never deny it. There's a Bank note for two hundred pounds; and now I am out of your debt.—Where the deuce is this tea, I wonder?

Molly. I never saw such a man in my life.

Amel. I don't know that I ever was so thoroughly confounded [*apart.*]—Sir! [*to Freeport.*]

Free. Well?

Amel. This noble action has surprised me still more than your conversation, but you must excuse my refusal of your kindness; for I must confess, that if I were to accept what you offer, I don't know when I should be able to restore it.

Free. Restore it! why who wants you to restore it? I never dreamt of restitution.

Amel. I feel, I feel your goodness to the bottom of my soul; but you must excuse me. I have no occasion for your bounty; take your note, Sir, and bestow it where it is wanted.

Molly. Lord, Madam! you are ten times stranger than the gentleman.—I tell you what, Sir; [*to Freeport*] it does not signify talking; we are in the greatest distress in the world, and if it had not been for the

T 2 kind-

kindness and good-nature of Mrs. Goodman, we might have died by this time. My lady has concealed her distress from every body that was willing and able to relieve her; you have come to the knowledge of it in spite of her teeth; and I hope that you will oblige her, in spite of her teeth, to accept of your generous offer.

Amel. No more, my dear Polly; if you would not have me die with shame, say no more! Return the gentleman his note with my best thanks for his kindness; tell him, I durst not accept of it; for when a woman receives presents from a man, the world will always suspect that she pays for them at the expence of her virtue.

Free. What's that! what does she say, child?

Molly. Lord, Sir, I hardly know what she says. She says, that when a gentleman makes a young lady presents, he is always supposed to have a design upon her virtue.

Free. Nonsense! why shou'd she suspect me of an ungenerous design, because I do a generous action?

Molly. Do you hear, Madam?

Amel. Yes, I hear; I admire; but I must persist in my refusal: if that scandalous fellow Spatter were to hear of this, he would stick at saying nothing.

Free. Eh! what's that?

Molly. She is afraid you should be taken for her lover, Sir.

Free.

Free. I for your lover! not I. I never saw you before. I don't love you; so make no scruples upon that account; I like you well enough, but I don't love you at all; not at all, I tell you.—If you have a mind never to see my face any more, good bye t'ye!—You shall never see me any more. If you like I should come back again, I'll come back again; but I lose time, I have business; your servant! [*going.*

Amel. Stay, Sir! do not leave me without receiving the sincerest acknowledgments of my gratitude and esteem; but, above all, receive your note again, and do not put me any longer to the blush!

Free. The woman is a fool.

Enter Mrs. GOODMAN.

Amel. Come hither, I beseech you, Mrs. Goodman.

Mrs. Good. Your pleasure, Madam!

Amel. Here! take this note which that gentleman has given me by mistake; return it to him, I charge you; assure him of my esteem and admiration; but let him know I need no assistance, and cannot accept it.

[*Exit.*

Manent FREEPORT, &c.

Mrs. Good. Ah! Mr. Freeport! you have been at your old trade. You are always endeavouring to do good actions in secret; but

but the world always finds you out, you see.

Molly. Well; I don't believe there are two stranger people in England than my mistress, and that gentleman; one so ready to part with money; and the other so unwilling to receive it;—but don't believe her, Sir, for between friends, she is in very great need of assistance I assure you.

Mrs. Good. Indeed I believe so.

Free. Oh, I have no doubt on't; so I'll tell you what, Mrs. Goodman; keep the note, and supply her wants out of it without her knowledge; and now I think of it, that way is better than t'other.

Molly. I never saw such a strange man in my life. [Exit.

Mrs. Good. I shall obey your kind commands, Sir; poor soul; my heart bleeds for her; her virtue and misfortunes touch me to the soul.

Free. I have some little feeling for her too; but she is too proud. A fine face; fine figure; well behaved; well bred; and I dare say an excellent heart!—But she is too proud; tell her so, d'ye hear? tell her she is too proud. I shall be too late for my business—I'll see her again soon—It is a pity she is so proud. [Exeunt.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE A Hall.

Sir WILLIAM DOUGLAS alone.

A YOUNG woman! a native of Scotland! her name Amelia! supposed to be in the greatest distress, and living in total retirement! If fortune should for once smile upon me, and have thrown me into the very same house! I don't know what to think of it; and yet so many uncommon circumstances together recall the memory of my misfortunes, and awaken all the father in my bosom.—I must be satisfied.

Enter MOLLY crossing the stage.

Sir W. Madam! will you permit me to speak one word to you?

Molly. [coming forward.] If you please; what is your pleasure, Sir?

Sir W. I presume, Madam, you are the charming young woman I heard of?

Molly. I have a few charms in the eyes of some folks to be sure, Sir.

Sir W. And you are a native of Scotland, they tell me?

Molly. I am; at your service, Sir.

Sir W. Will you give me leave to ask the name of your family? Who is your father?

Molly. I really don't remember my father.

Sir W. Ha! not remember him, do you say? [earnestly.

Molly. No, Sir; but I have been told that he was—

Sir W. Who, Madam?

Molly. One of the most eminent bakers in Aberdeen, Sir.

Sir W. Oh, I conceive! You live, I suppose, with the young lady I meant to speak to. I mistook you for the lady herself.

Molly. You did me a great deal of honour, I assure you, Sir.

Sir W. But you are acquainted with your mistress's family?

Molly. Family, Sir!

Sir W. Ay; who are her parents?

Molly. She comes of very creditable parents, I promise you, Sir.

Sir W. I don't doubt it; but who are they? I have particular reasons for enquiring.

Molly. Very likely so; but I must beg to be excused, Sir.

Sir W. Of what age is your mistress? you will tell me that at least.

Molly. Oh, as to her age, she don't care who knows that; she is too young to deny her

her age yet a-while. She is about one-and-twenty, Sir.

Sir W. Precisely the age of my Amelia.
[*apart.*] One-and-twenty, you say?
[*to Molly.*

Molly. Yes, Sir; and I am about two-and-twenty; there is no great difference between us.

Sir W. [*apart.*] It must be so; her age, her country, her manner of living, all concur to prove her mine; my dear child, whom I left to taste of misfortune from her cradle.

Molly. [*apart.*] What is he muttering; I wonder; I wish this one-and-twenty has not turned the old gentleman's head.

Sir W. Let me beg the favour of you to conduct me to your mistress: I want to speak with her.

Molly. She will see no company, Sir; she is indisposed; she is in great affliction; and receives no visits at all.

Sir W. Mine is not a visit of form or ceremony, or even impertinent curiosity; but on the most urgent business. Tell her I am her fellow-countryman.

Molly. What! are you of Scotland too, Sir?

Sir W. I am. Tell her I take part in her afflictions, and may perhaps, bring her some consolation.

Molly.

Sir W. Will you give me leave to ask the name of your family? Who is your father?

Molly. I really don't remember my father.

Sir W. Ha! not remember him, do you say? [earnestly.]

Molly. No, Sir; but I have been told that he was—

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Sir W. [apart.] It must be so; her age, her country, her manner of living, all concur to prove her mine; my dear child, whom I left to taste of misfortune from her cradle.

Molly. [apart.] What is he muttering, I wonder; I wish this one-and-twenty has not turned the old gentleman's head.

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Molly. What! are you of Scotland too, Sir?

Sir W. I am. Tell her I take part in her afflictions, and may perhaps, bring her some consolation.

Molly.

Molly. There is something mighty particular about this old gentleman! He has not brought another two hundred pounds, sure! [*apart.*] Well, Sir; since you are so very pressing, since you say you are our fellow-countryman, if you will walk this way, I'll speak to my mistress, and see what I can do for you.

Sir W. I am obliged to you. [*Exit Molly.*] And now, if I may trust the forebodings of an old fond heart, I am going to throw my arms about my daughter. [*Exit.*]

As Sir WILLIAM follows MOLLY out on one side, SPATTER appears on the other.

SPATTER alone.

There they go! what the deuce can that old fellow and Amelia's maid do together? The slut is certainly conducting him to her mistress! In less than half an hour I expect that Amelia will be apprehended. In the mean time I must be upon the watch; for, since I have laid the information, it is high time that I should collect some materials to support it.—Who comes here? Lord Falbridge's valet de chambre: his errand is to Amelia, without doubt; something may be learnt there, perhaps.

Enter

Enter La FRANCE.

Ha! Monsieur La France! your servant.

La Fr. Serviteur! ver glad to see you, Monsieur Spatter.

Spat. Well; what brings you here? eh, Monsieur La France?

La Fr. Von lettre, Monsieur.

Spat. A letter to whom?

La Fr. From my Lor to Mademoiselle Amelie.

Spat. Oh, you're mistaken, Monsieur; that letter is for Lady Alton.

La Fr. Lady Alton! no, *ma foi!* it be for Mademoiselle. I am no mistake. *Je ne me trompe pas la dessus.*

Spat. Why, have not you carried several letters from Lord Falbridge to Lady Alton?

La Fr. Ob, *que oui!* but dis be for de young laty dat lif here; for Mademoiselle: mi Lor lov her! *ma foi;* he lov her *à la folie.*

Spat. And he loved Lady Alton *à la folie*, did not he?

La Fr. Ob, *que non!* he lov her so genzely! *si tranquillement;* *ma foi,* he lov her *à la Françoisè.*—But now he lov Mademoiselle; he no eat, no sleep, no speak, but Mademoiselle; no tink but of Mademoiselle; quite an oder ting, Monsieur Spatter, quite an oder ting!

Spat.

Spat. Well, well; no matter for that; the letter is for Lady Alton, I promise you.

La Fr. *Ab! pardonnez moi!*

Spat. It is, I assure you; and to convince you of it, see here, Monsieur! Lady Alton has sent you five guineas to pay the postage.

La Fr. Five guinées! *ma foi*, I believe I was mistake, indeed.

Spat. Ay, ay; I told you you were mistaken: and after all, if it should not be for her Ladyship, she will inclose it in another case, and send it to Amelia, and nobody will be the wiser.

La Fr. *Fort bien; ver well; la voila.* [gives the letter.] I have got five guinées; I don't care.

Spat. Why should you? Where's the harm, if one woman should receive a letter written to another? There will be nothing lost by it; for if Amelia don't receive this, she will receive others; and letters of this sort are all alike, you know.

La Fr. *Begar dat is ver true. Adieu, Sir.—I have execute my commission: adieu. Ob! je fais bien mes commissions, moi!* [Exit.

SPATTER alone.

See the effects of secret-service-money! Intelligence must be paid for; and the bribing couriers is a fair stratagem, by all the

the laws of war. Shall I break open this letter; or carry it to Lady Aiton as it is? No; I'll read it myself, that I may have the credit of communicating the contents. Let me see! [*opens the letter and reads.*]

"Thou dearest, most respectable, and most virtuous of women!" So! this is *à la folie*, indeed, as Monsieur La France calls it.—

"If any consideration could add to my remorse, for the injury I have offered you,

"it would be the discovery of your real character." Ah, ah! "I know who you

"are. I know you are the daughter of the unhappy Sir William Douglas."—So, so!

—"Judge then of the tumult of my soul; which is only preserved from the horrors

"of despair, by the hopes of rendering some service to the father, which may,

"perhaps, in some measure atone for my behaviour to his too justly offended daughter.

"Give me leave, this evening, to sue for my pardon at your feet, and to inform you of the measures I have taken.

"In the mean time believe me unalterably yours.

"Falbridge."

This is a precious paquet, indeed.—Now if I could discover the father too!—His

Lordship's visit will be too late in the evening, I fancy; the lady will not be at

home; but before she goes, once more to my old trade of eaves-dropping about her

apart-

apartments! The old gentleman and she are certainly together, and their conversation perhaps may be curious. At all events, Lady Alton must be gratified. Men of letters never get any thing of their patrons, but by sacrificing to their foibles. [Exit.

AMELIA'S Apartment.

Sir WILLIAM DOUGLAS and AMELIA
discovered sitting.

Sir W. Every word you utter, touches me to the soul. Nothing but such noble sentiments could have supported your spirit under so many misfortunes.

Amel. Perhaps it is to my misfortunes that I owe those sentiments; had I been brought up in ease and luxury, my mind, which has learnt fortitude from distress, might have been enfeebled by prosperity.

Sir W. Thou most amiable of thy sex, I conjure thee to hide nothing from me. You say you were born at Aberdeen; you confess that you are derived from one of those unhappy families, who suffered themselves to be so fatally deluded, and drawn from their allegiance to the best of kings. Why, why then, will you not tell me all? Why do you endeavour to conceal your name and family?

Amel. My duty to my family obliges me to silence. My father's life is forfeited
by

by the sentence of the law; and he owes his existence at this hour to flight or secrecy. He may be in England; he may, for aught I know, be in London; and the divulging my name and family might create a fresh search after him, and expose him to new perils. Your conversation, it is true, has inspired me with respect and tenderness; but yet you are a stranger to me: I have reason to fear every thing, and one word may undo me.

Sir W. Alas! one word may make us both happy. Tell me; of what age were you when your cruel fortune separated you from your father?

Amel. An infant; so young, that I have not the least traces of him in my memory.

Sir W. And your mother; what became of her?

Amel. She, as I have often heard, was carried off by a fever, while she was preparing to embark with me, to follow the fortunes of my father. He, driven almost to despair by this last stroke of ill fortune, continually shifted his place of residence abroad; but for some years past, whether by his death, the miscarriage of letters, the infidelity of friends, or other accidents, I have not received the least intelligence of him; and now I almost begin to despair of hearing of him again, tho' I still persist in my enquiries.

Sir

Sir W. [*rising.*] It must be so; it is as I imagined. All these touching circumstances are melancholy witnesses of the truth of it. Yes, my child! I am that unhappy father whom you lost so early; I am that unfortunate husband, whom death and my unhappy fate, almost at the very same period, divorced from the best of wives; I am—I am Sir William Douglas.

Amel. Sir William Douglas! have I lived to see my father! then heaven has heard my prayers; this is the first happy moment of my unfortunate life [*embracing.*]—And yet your presence here fills me with apprehensions; I tremble for your safety, for your life; how durst you venture your person in this kingdom? how can you expose yourself to the danger of discovery in this town? My whole soul is in a tumult of fear and joy.

Sir W. Do not be alarmed, my Amelia; fear nothing; heaven begins to smile upon my fortune. To find thee so unexpectedly, to find thee with a mind so superior to distress, softens the anguish of my past life, and gives me happy omens of the future.

Amel. Oh, Sir! by the joy I receive from the embraces of a father, let me conjure you to provide for your safety! do not expose me to the horror of losing you again; of losing you for ever! Quit this town immediately; every moment that you remain
in

in it, is at the hazard of your life; I am ready to accompany you to any part of the world.

Sir W. My dear child! how I grieve that your youth and virtue should be involved in my misfortunes! Yes, we will quit this kingdom; prepare for your departure, and we may leave London this evening.

Enter OWEN hastily.

Ha! Owen! thou art come at a happy moment. I have found my daughter. This is your young mistress, the paragon of her sex, my dear, my amiable Amelia.

Owen. Oh, Sir, this is no time for congratulation. You are in the most imminent danger.

Sir W. What is the matter?

Owen. The officers of government are at this instant in the house. I saw them enter; I heard them say they had authority to apprehend some suspected person, and I ran immediately to inform you of your danger.

Amel. Oh, heaven! My father, what will you do?

Owen. Do not be alarmed, Sir; we are two; we are armed; and we may perhaps be able to make our way through them; I will stand by you to the last drop of my blood.

Sir W. Thou faithful creature! Stay, Owen; our fears may betray us; till we are sure we are attacked, let us shew no signs of opposition!

Enter MOLLY, hastily.

Molly. My dear mistress! we are ruined; we are undone for ever.

Amel. There are officers of justice in the house; I have heard it; tell me, tell me this instant whom do they seek for?

Molly. For you, Madam; for you; they have a warrant to apprehend you, they say.

Amel. But they have no warrant to apprehend any body else?

Molly. No, Madam; nobody else; but I will follow you to the end of the world.

Amel. My dear Molly, I did not mean you. Retire, Sir! [*to Sir William.*] For heavens sake leave me to their mercy; they can have no facts against me; my life has been as innocent as unfortunate, and I must soon be released.

Sir W. No, my child; I will not leave thee.

Molly. My child? This is Sir William Douglas then, as sure as I am alive!

Sir W. Besides, retiring at such a time might create suspicion, and incur the danger we would wish to avoid.

Molly.

Molly. They will be in the room in a moment; I think I hear them upon the stairs; they would have been here before me, if Mr. Freeport had not come in and stopt them.

Sir W. Courage, my dear Amelia!

Amel. Alas, Sir! I have no terrors but for you.

Owen. They are here, Sir.

Molly. Oh, lord! here they are indeed; I am frightened out of my wits.

Enter Mrs. GOODMAN, FREEPORT, and OFFICER.

Free. A warrant to seize her? a harmless young woman? it is impossible.

Officer. Pardon me, Sir; if the young lady goes by the name of Amelia Walton, I have a warrant to apprehend her.

Free. On what account!

Officer. As a dangerous person.

Free. Dangerous!

Officer. Yes, Sir; suspected of disaffection and treasonable practices.

Amel. I am the unhappy object of your search, Sir; give me leave to know the substance of the accusation.

Officer. I cannot tell you particulars, Madam; but information upon oath has been made against you, and I am ordered to apprehend you.

Mrs. Good. But you will accept of bail, Sir; I will be bound for all I am worth in the world.

Officer. In these cases, Madam, bail is not usual; and if ever accepted at all, it is excessively high; and given by persons of very large property, and known character.

Free. Well; my property is large enough, and my character very well known. My name is Freeport.

Officer. I know you very well, Sir.

Free. I'll answer for her appearance; I'll be bound in a penalty of five hundred pounds, a thousand, two thousand, or what sum you please.

Officer. And will you enter into the recognisance immediately?

Free. With all my heart, come along! [going.]

Officer. And are you in earnest, Sir?

Free. Ay, to be sure. Why not?

Officer. Because, Sir, I'll venture to say there are but few people that place their money on such securities.

Free. So much the worse; he who can employ it in doing good, places it on the best security, and puts it out at the highest interest in the world.

[Exit with the Officer.]

Manent

Manent Sir WILLIAM DOUGLAS, &c.

Sir W. I can hardly trust my eyes and ears; who is this benevolent gentleman?

Mrs. Good. I don't wonder you are surprised at Mr. Freeport's manner of proceeding, Sir; but it is his way. He is not a man of compliment; but he does the most essential service in less time, than others take in making protestations.

Molly. Here he is again; heaven reward him!

Re-enter FREEPORT.

Free. So! that matter is dispatched; now to our other affairs! this is a busy day with me.—Look-ye, Sir William; we must be brief; there is no time to be lost.

Sir W. How! am I betrayed then!

Free. Betrayed! no; but you are discovered.

Owen. What! my master discovered!
[*offers to draw.*]

Free. [to *Owen.*] Nay, never clap thy hand to thy sword, old trusty! your master is in danger, it is true; but not from me, I promise you. Go, and get him a post-chaise; and let him pack off this instant; that is the best way of shewing your attachment to him at present.—Twenty years, Sir William, have not made so great an alteration in you, but I knew you the moment I saw you.

Mrs. Good. Harbour no distrust of Mr. Freeport, Sir; he is one of the worthiest men living.

Amel. I know his worthiness. His behaviour to the officer but this moment, uncommonly generous as it appeared, is not the first testimony he has given me to day, of his noble disposition.

Free. Noble! p'shaw! nonsense!

Sir W. [to Freeport.] Sir; the kind manner in which you have been pleased to interest yourself in my affairs, has almost as much overpowered me, as if you had surprised me with hostile proceedings. Which way shall I thank you for your goodness to me and my Amelia?

Free. Don't thank me at all; when you are out of danger, perhaps I may make a proposal to you, that will not be disagreeable; at present think of nothing but your escape; for I should not be surprised, if they were very shortly to make you the same compliment, they have paid to Amelia: and in your case, which is really a serious one, they might not be in the humour to accept of my recognisance.

Mrs. Good. Mr. Freeport is in the right, Sir; every moment of delay is hazardous; let us prevail upon you to depart immediately! Amelia being wholly innocent, cannot be long detained in custody, and
as

as soon as she is released, I will bring her to you, wherever you shall appoint.

Free. Ay, ay, you must be gone directly, Sir! and as you may want ready money upon the road, take my purse!

[offering his purse.]

Sir W. No, thou truest friend, I have no need of it. With what wonderful goodness have you acted towards me and my unhappy family!

Free. Wonderful! why wonderful? Would not you have done the same, if you had been in my place?

Sir W. I hope I should.

Free. Well then, where is the wonder of it? Come, come, let us see you make ready for your departure!

Sir W. Thou best of men!

Free. Best of men? Heaven forbid! I have done no more than my duty by you. I am a man myself; and am bound to be a friend to all mankind, you know.

[Exeunt.]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

SCENE SPATTER'S Apartment.

Lady ALTON with a letter in her hand,
and SPATTER.

L. Alt. **T**HANKS, my good Spatter, many thanks for this precious epistle! more precious at present than one of Ovid, Pliny, or Cicero. It is at once a billet-doux and a state paper; and serves at the same time to convict her of conspiring against me and the publick.

Spat. It is a valuable manuscript, to be sure, Madam; and yet that is but the least half of my discoveries, since I left your Ladyship.

L. Alt. But is not this half, according to the Grecian axiom, more than the whole, Mr. Spatter?

Spat. When you know the whole, I believe you will think not, Madam.

L. Alt. Out with it then! I am impatient to be mistress of it.

Spat. By intercepting this letter of Lord Falbridge's, your Ladyship sees that we have discovered Amelia to be the daughter of Sir William Douglas.

L. Alt.

L. Alt. True.

Spat. But what would you say, Madam, if I had found out the father himself too?

L. Alt. Sir William Douglas!

Spat. Is now in this house, Madam.

L. Alt. Impossible!

Spat. Nothing more certain. He arrived this morning under a feigned name. I saw him conducted to Amelia's apartment. This raised my suspicion, and I planted myself at her door, with all the circumspection of a spy, and address of a chambermaid. There I overheard their mutual acknowledgments of each other; and a curious interview it was. First they wept for grief; and then they wept for joy; and then they wept for grief again. Their tears, however, were soon interrupted by the arrival of the officer, whose purpose was partly defeated, as you have already heard, by the intervention of Freeport.

L. Alt. Yes, the brute! But that delay was not half so unfortunate, as your discoveries have been happy, Spatter; for my revenge shall now return on them with redoubled fury.—Issue out upon them once more; see what they are about; and be sure to give me immediate notice if Lord Falbridge should come. [going.]

Spat. Stay, Madam. After intercepting the letter, I sent for your Ladyship, that
at

at so critical a juncture, you might be present on the spot: and if you go home again, we shall lose time, which perhaps may be precious, in running to and fro. Suppose you step into the study, till I return. You will find my own answer to my last pamphlet, and the two first sheets of the next month's Magazine to amuse you.

L. Alt. Planned like a wise general! Do you then go, and *reconnoitre* the enemy, while I lie here in ambush to reinforce you as soon as there shall be occasion. Do but give the word, we'll make a vigorous sally, put their whole body to rout, and take Amelia and her father prisoners.

[*Exeunt severally.*

A Hall.

FREEPORT alone.

I don't know how it is; but this Amelia here runs in my head strangely. Ever since I saw her, I think of nothing else. I am not in love with her.—In love with her! that's nonsense. But I feel a kind of uneasiness, a sort of pain that—I don't know what to make of it—I'll speak to her father about her.

Enter OWEN.

Well, old true-penny! Have you prepared every thing for Sir William's departure?
Owen.

Owen. We had need be going, indeed, Sir; we are in continual danger while we stay here; who d'ye think lodged the information against Madam Amelia?

Free. Who?

Owen. A person who lodges in this very house, it seems: one Mr. Spatter, Sir.

Free. Spatter! how d'ye know?

Owen. I had it from one of the officers who came to apprehend her.

Free. A dog! I could find in my heart to cut off his ears with my own hands, and save him the disgrace of the pillory.

Owen. My poor master is always unfortunate. If Lord Brumpton had lived a week longer, Sir William might perhaps have been out of the reach of their malice.

Free. Lord Brumpton?

Owen. Yes, Sir. He was soliciting my master's pardon; but died before he had accomplished his benevolent intentions.

Free. Ha! A thought strikes me. [*apart.*] Hark ye, friend, [*to Owen*] does Sir William know the present Lord Brumpton?

Owen. No, Sir. The late lord had no children, or near relations, living; and indeed, he was the only surviving friend of my poor master in the kingdom.

Free. Is the chaise at the door?

Owen. Not yet, Sir; but I expect it every moment.

Free.

Free. Run to your master, and desire him not to go till I see him. Tell him I am going out upon his business, and will be back within this hour.

Owen. I will let him know immediately.

— Ah, you're a true friend indeed, Sir.

[*shaking him earnestly by the hand.*]

Free. Pooh! prithee!

Owen. Ah! Heaven preserve you!

[*Exit.*]

FREEMPORT *alone.*

Fare thee well, old honesty!—By the death of Lord Brumpton, without children or near relations living, as Owen says, the title and estate come to my old friend Jack Brumpton, of Leverpoole; who is of a distant branch; a fortieth cousin, for aught I know; who has past his whole life in a compting-house; and who, a few years ago, no more dreamt of being a Lord, than Grand Signior, or Great Mogul. He has so good a heart, that I believe it is impossible even for a title to corrupt it. I know he is in town; so I'll go to him immediately; acquaint him with the obligation entailed on him, to be of service to Sir William; and make him heir to the benevolence of his predecessor, as well as his wealth and dignity. [*going, stops.*] Who's here! Mrs. Goodman and Spatter, as I live! Oh the dog! my blood rises at the villain.

If

If I don't take care, I shall incur an action of battery for caning the rascal.

Enter Mrs. GOODMAN and SPATTER.

Mrs. Good. In short, Mr. Spatter, I must beg leave to give you warning, and desire that you would provide yourself with another lodging as soon as possible.

Spat. What now? What the deuce is the matter with you, Mrs. Goodman?

Mrs. Good. I see now the meaning of Lady Alton's recommendation of such a lodger to my house, as well as of her visits to Amelia, and her frequent conferences with you, Sir.

Spat. The woman is certainly out of her senses.

Free. What has been laid to your charge is no joke, Sir.

Spat. What! are you there to keep up her back-hand, Mr. Freeport? What is all this?

Free. You are found out to be a spy, Sir.

Mrs. Good. A person who pries into the secrets of families, merely to betray them.

Free. An informer.

Mrs. Good. An eaves-dropper.

Free. A liar.

Spat. Right-hand and left! this is too much: what the plague is the matter with you both!

Mrs.

Mrs. Good. Did not you go and tell that Amelia was a native of Scotland?

Spat. Well; and where's the harm of being born in Scotland?

Free. None; except by your malicious interpretation, rascal; by means of which you made it the ground of an information against her, and were the cause of her being apprehended.

Spat. And you were the cause of her being released; every man in his way, Mr. Freeport!

Free. Look you, firrah! you are one of those wretches, who miscall themselves authors; a fellow, whose heart, and tongue, and pen, are equally scandalous; who try to insinuate yourself every where, to make mischief if there is none, and to increase it, if you find any.—But if you fetch and carry like a spaniel, you must be treated like one. I have observed that you are always loitering in the passages; but if I catch you within the wind of a door again, I'll beat you till you are as black as your own ink, firrah. Now you know my mind. [Exit.

Spat. Very civil and very polite, indeed, Mr. Freeport. Ha! here comes my friend Lord Falbridge.

Mrs. Good. Lord Falbridge your friend? For shame, Mr. Spatter!

Enter

Enter Lord FALBRIDGE hastily.

L. Fal. Mrs. Goodman, I rejoice to see you. Tell me, how does my Amelia? I have heard of her distress, and flew to her relief. Was she alarmed? Was she terrified?

Mrs. Good. Not much, my Lord: she sustained the shock with the same constancy that she endures every other affliction.

L. Fal. I know her merit; I am too well acquainted with her greatness of soul; and hope it is not yet too late for me to do justice to her virtue.—Go to her, my dear Mrs. Goodman, and tell her, I beg to see her: I have something that concerns her very nearly, to impart to her.

Mrs. Good. I will, my Lord. [*Exit.*]

L. Fal. Oh, Mr. Spatter! I did not see you. What have you got there, Sir?

[*seeing a paper in his hand.*]

Spat. Proposals for a new work, my Lord! May I beg the honour of your Lordship's name among my list of subscribers?

L. Fal. With all my heart, Sir. I am already in your debt on another account.

[*pulling out his purse.*]

Spat. To me, my Lord? You do me a great deal of honour; I should be very proud to be of the least service to your Lordship.

L. Fal. You have been of great service to me already, Sir. It was you, I find, lodged

lodged the information against this young lady.

Spat. I did no more than my duty, my Lord.

L. Fal. Yes; you did me a favour, Sir. I consider only the deed, and put the intention quite out of the question. You meant to do Amelia a prejudice, and you have done me a service: for by endeavouring to bring her into distress, you gave me an opportunity of shewing my eagerness to relieve her.—There, Sir! there is for the good you have done, while you meant to make mischief. [*giving him a few guineas.*] But take this along with it; if you ever presume to mention the name of Amelia any more, or give yourself the least concern about her, or her affairs, I'll—

Spat. I am obliged to your Lordship.

[*bowing.*]

L. Fal. Be gone, Sir; leave me.

Spat. Your most humble servant, my Lord!—So! I am abused by every body; and yet I get money by every body;—egad, I believe I am a much cleverer fellow, than I thought I was. [*Exit.*]

Lord FALBRIDGE alone.

Alas! I am afraid that Amelia will not see me. What would I not suffer to repair the affront that I have offered her?

[*Enter*]

Enter MOLLY.

Ha! Polly! how much am I obliged to you for sending me notice of Amelia's distress?

Mol. Hush, my Lord! Speak lower, for heaven's sake! My mistress has so often forbid me to tell any thing about her, that I tremble still at the thoughts of the confidence I have put in you. I was bewitched, I think, to let you know who she was.

L. Fal. You were inspired, Polly; heaven inspired you to acquaint me with all her distresses, that I might recommend myself to her favour again, by my zeal to serve her, though against her will.

Mol. That was the reason I told you; for else I am sure I should die with grief to give her the least uneasiness.

L. Fal. But may I hope to see Amelia? Will she let me speak with her?

Mol. No indeed, my Lord; she is so offended at your late behaviour, that she will not even suffer us to mention your name to her.

L. Fal. Death and confusion! What a wretch have I made myself! Go, Polly, go and let her know that I must speak with her; inform her; that I have been active for her welfare; and have authority to release her from the information lodged against her.

Mol. I will let her know your anxiety, my Lord; but indeed I am afraid she will not see you.

L. Fal. She must, Polly, she must. The agonies of my mind are intolerable; tell her, she must come, if it be but for a moment; or else, in the bitterness of despair, I fear I shall break into her apartment, and throw myself at her feet.

Mol. Lud! you frighten me out of my wits. Have a little patience, and I'll tell my mistress what a taking you are in.

L. Fal. Fly, then! I can taste no comfort, till I hear her resolution.

[*Exit Molly.*]

Lord FALBRIDGE alone.

How culpably have I acted towards the most amiable of her sex! But I will make her every reparation in my power. The warmth and sincerity of my repentance shall extort forgiveness from her. By heaven, she comes!—Death! how sensibly does an ungenerous action abase us! I am conscious of the superiority of her virtue, and almost dread the encounter.

Enter AMELIA.

Amel. I understand, my Lord, that by your application I am held free of the charge laid against me; and that I am once more entirely at liberty. I am truly sensible
of

of your good offices, and thank you for the trouble you have taken. [*going.*

L. Fal. Stay, Madam! do not leave me in still greater distraction than you found me. If my zeal to serve you has had any weight with you, it must have inspired you with more favourable dispositions towards me.

Amel. You must pardon me, my Lord, if I cannot so soon forget a very late transaction. After that all your proceedings alarm me: nay, even your present zeal to serve me creates new suspicions, while I cannot but be doubtful of the motives from which it proceeds.

L. Fal. Cruel Amelia! for, guilty as I am, I must complain, since it was your own diffidence that was in part the occasion of my crime.—Why did you conceal your rank and condition from me? Why did not you tell me, that you were the daughter of the unhappy Sir William Douglas?

Amel. Who told you that I was so, my Lord?

L. Fal. Nay, do not deny it now: it is in vain to attempt to conceal it any longer; it was the main purport of my letter to apprise you of my knowledge of it.

Amel. Your letter, my Lord!

L. Fal. Yes; wild as it was, it was the offspring of compunction and remorse; and if it conveyed the dictates of my soul,

it spoke me the truest of penitents. You did not disdain to read it, sure!

Amel. Indeed, my Lord, I never received any letter from you.

L. Fal. Not received any! I sent it this very morning. My own servant was the messenger. What can this mean? Has he betrayed me? At present, suffer me to compensate, as far as possible, for the wrongs I have done you: receive my hand and heart, and let an honourable marriage obliterate the very idea of my past conduct.

Amel. No, my Lord; you have discovered me, it is true: I am the daughter of Sir William Douglas. Judge for yourself then; and think how I ought to look upon a man, who has insulted my distress, and endeavoured to tempt me to dishonour my family.

L. Fal. Your justice must acquit me of the intention of that offence, since at that time I was ignorant of your illustrious extraction.

Amel. It may be so; yet your excuse is but an aggravation of the crime. You imagined me, perhaps, to be of as low and mean an origin, as you thought me poor and unhappy. You supposed that I had no title to any dowry but my honour, no dependance but on my virtue; and yet you attempted to rob me of that virtue, which was the only jewel that could raise the
meanness

meannefs of my birth, or fupport me under my misfortunes; which, inftead of relieving, you chofe to make the pandar to your vile inclinations.

L. Fal. Thou moft amiable of thy fex, how I adore thee! Even thy refentment renders thee more lovely in my eyes, and makes thee, if poffible, dearer to me than ever. Nothing but our union can ever make me happy.

Amel. Such an union muft not, cannot be.

L. Fal. Why? What fhould forbid it?

Amel. My father.

L. Fal. Your father! where is he? In whatever part of the world he now refides, I will convey you to him, and he fhall ratify our happinefs.

Enter MOLLY, haftily.

Molly. Oh lord, Madam! here's the angry lady coming again; ſhe that made fuch a racket this morning.

Amel. Lady Alton?

Molly. Yes, Madam.

L. Fal. Lady Alton! Confufion! Stay, Madam. [to *Amelia*, who is going.

Amel. No, my Lord; I have endured one affront from her already to-day; why fhould I expofe myfelf to a fecond? Her Ladyſhip, you know, has a prior claim to your attention. [Exit.

X 3

L. Fal.

L. Fal. Distraction! I had a thousand things to say to her.—Go, my dear Polly, follow my Amelia! Plead earnestly in my behalf; urge all the tenderest things that fancy can suggest, and return to me as soon as Lady Alton is departed!

Molly. I will, my Lord. Oh lud! here she is, as I am alive! [Exit.

L. Fal. Abandoned by Amelia! and hunted by this fury! I shall run wild.

Enter Lady ALTON.

L. Alt. You may well turn away from me; at length I have full conviction of your baseness. I am now assured of my own shame, and your falsehood. Perfidious monster!

L. Fal. It is unjust to tax me with perfidy, Madam. I have rather acted with too much sincerity. I long ago frankly declared to you the utter impossibility of our reconciliation.

L. Alt. What! after having made your addresses to me? After having sworn the most inviolable affection for me! Oh, thou arch-deceiver!

L. Fal. I never deceived you: when I professed a passion, I really entertained one; when I made my addresses to you, I wished to call you my wife.

L. Alt. And what can you alledge in excuse of your falsehood? Have you not been guilty of the blackest perjury?

L. Fal.

L. Fal. The change of my sentiments needs no excuse from me, Madam; you were yourself the occasion of it.—In spite of the torrent of fashion, and the practice of too many others of my rank in life, I have a relish for domestick happiness; and have always wished for a wife, who might render my home a delightful refuge from the cares and bustle of the world abroad. These were my views with you; but, thank heaven, your outrageous temper happily betrayed itself in good time, and convinced me that my sole aim in marriage would be frustrated: for I could neither have been happy myself, nor have made you so.

L. Alt. Paltry evasion! You have abandoned me for your Amelia; you have meanly quitted a person of letters, a woman of rank and condition, for an illiterate vagabond, a needy adventurer.

L. Fal. The person you mention, Madam, is, indeed, the opposite of yourself; she is all meekness, grace, and virtue.

L. Alt. Provoking traitor! You urge me past all sufferance. I meant to expostulate, but you oblige me to invective.—But, have a care! You are not so secure as you suppose yourself; and I may revenge myself sooner than you imagine.

L. Fal. I am aware of your vindictive disposition, Madam; for I know that you

are more envious than jealous, and rather violent than tender; but the present object of my affections shall be placed above your resentment, and challenge your respect.

L. Alt. Away, fond man! I know that object of your affections better than yourself; I know who she is; I know who the stranger is that arrived for her this morning; I know all: men more powerful than yourself shall be apprised of the whole immediately; and within these two hours, nay, within this hour, you shall see the unworthy object, for which you have slighted me, with all that is dear to her and you, torn away from you perforce.

[*going.*

L. Fal. Ha! how's this? Stay, Madam! Explain yourself! But one word; do but hear me.

L. Alt. No; I disdain to hear you: I scorn all explanation. I have discovered the contemptible cause of your inconstancy, and know you to be mean, base, false, treacherous, and perfidious. You have forfeited my tenderness, and be assured you shall feel the effects of my revenge.

[*Exit.*

L. Fal. What does she mean! The stranger that arrived to-day!—That arrived for my Amelia! Sure it cannot be. [*pausing.*] It is possible that—[*Re-enter Molly.*] Ha, Polly!

Polly! explain these riddles to me. Lady Alton threatens me; she threatens my Amelia: does she know any thing? Her fury will transport her to every extravagance: how dreadful is jealousy in a woman!

Molly. Ay, it is a dreadful thing, indeed, my Lord. Well! heaven send me always to be in love, and never to be jealous!

L. Fal. But she talked of tearing Amelia from me perforce.—And then some stranger—She threatens *him* too: what is it she means?

Molly. What a gentleman that came to Madam Amelia? [*alarmed.*]

L. Fal. Yes, to Amelia; and arrived this very day, she says.

Molly. We are ruined for ever: she means Sir William Douglas!

L. Fal. The father of my Amelia! Is he here?

Molly. Yes, my Lord; I was bound to secrecy; but I can't help telling you the whole truth, because I am sure you will do all in your power to be of service to us.

L. Fal. You know my whole soul, Polly: this outrageous woman's malice shall be defeated.

Molly. Heaven send it may!

L. Fal.

L. Fal. Be assured, it shall: do not alarm your mistress; I fly to serve her, and will return as soon as possible.

Molly. I shall be miserable till we see you again, my Lord. [Exit.

L. Fal. And now, good heaven! that art the protection of innocence, second my endeavours! enable me to repair the affront I have offered to injured virtue, and let me relieve the unhappy from their distresses!

[Exit.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT

ACT V.

SCENE *continues.*

Lord FALBRIDGE and MOLLY meeting.

Molly. OH, my Lord! I am glad to see you returned.

L. Fal. Where is your mistress? [*eagerly.*

Molly. In her own chamber.

L. Fal. And where is Sir William Douglas?

Molly. With my mistress.

L. Fal. And have there been no officers here to apprehend them?

Molly. Officers! No, my Lord. Officers! you frighten me. I was in hopes, by seeing your Lordship so soon again, that there were some good news for us.

L. Fal. Never was any thing so unfortunate. The noble persons, to whom I meant to make application, were out of town; nor could by any means be seen or spoken with, till to-morrow morning: and to add to my distraction, I learnt that a new information had been made, and a new warrant issued to apprehend Sir William Douglas and Amelia.

Molly. Oh dear! What can we do then?

L. Fal. Do! I shall run mad. Go, my dear Polly, go to your Mistress, and Sir William,

William, and inform them of their danger. Every moment is precious, but perhaps they may yet have time to escape.

Molly. I will, my Lord! [going.

L. Fal. Stay! [*Molly returns.*] My chariot is at the door; tell them, not to wait for any other carriage, but to get into that, and drive away immediately.

Molly. I will, my Lord. Oh dear! I never was so terrified in all my life.

[Exit.

Lord FALBRIDGE alone.

If I can but save them now, we may gain time for mediation. Ha! what noise? Are the officers coming! Who's here?

Enter La FRANCE.

La Fr. Milor, Monf. le Duc de—

L. Fal. Sirrah! Villain! You have been the occasion of all this mischief. By your carelessness, or treachery, Lady Alton has intercepted my letter to Amelia.

La Fr. Lèdy Altón?

L. Fal. Yes, dog; did not I send you here this morning with a letter?

La Fr. Oui, Milor.

L. Fal. And did you bring it here, rascal!

La Fr. Oui, Milor.

L. Fal. No, sirrah. You did not bring it; the lady never received any letter from me;

me; she told me so herself; whom did you give it to? [*La France hesitates.*] Speak, firrah; or I'll shake your soul out of your body. [*shaking him.*]

La Fr. I giv it to—

L. Fal. Who, rascal?

La Fr. Monsieur Spatter.

L. Fal. Mr. Spatter?

La Fr. Oui, Milor; he promis to giv it to Mademoiselle Amelie, vid his own hand.

L. Fal. I shall soon know the truth of that, Sir, for yonder is Mr. Spatter himself: run, and tell him I desire to speak with him!

La Fr. Oui, Milor; *ma foi*, I vas very near kesh; I never was in more *vilain embarras* in all my life. [*Exit.*]

Lord FALBRIDGE alone.

My letter's falling into the hands of that fellow, accounts for every thing. The contents instructed him concerning Amelia. What a wretch I am! Destined every way to be of prejudice to that virtue, which I am bound to adore.

Re-enter La FRANCE with SPATTER.

Spat. Monsieur la France tells me, that your Lordship desires to speak with me; what are your commands, my Lord? [*pertly.*]

L. Fal.

L. Fal. The easy impudence of the rascal puts me out of all patience. [*to himself.*]

Spat. My Lord!

L. Fal. The last time I saw you, Sir, you were rewarded for the good you had done; you must expect now to be chastised for your mischief.

Spat. Mischief, my Lord?

L. Fal. Yes, Sir; where is that letter of mine, which La France tells me, he gave you to deliver to a young lady of this house?

Spat. Oh the devil! [*apart.*] Letter, my Lord? [*hesitates.*]

L. Fal. Yes, letter, Sir; did not you give it him, La France?

La Fr. Oui, Milor!

Spat. Y—e—e—s, yes, my Lord; I had the letter of Monsieur La France, to be sure, my Lord; but—but—

L. Fal. But what, firrah? give me the letter immediately; and if I find that the seal has been broken, I will break every bone in your skin.

Spat. For heaven's sake, my Lord! [*feeling in his pockets.*] I—I—I have not got the letter about me at present, my Lord; but if you will give me leave to step to my apartment, I'll bring it you immediately.

[*offering to go.*]

L. Fal. [*stopping him.*] No, no; that will not do, Sir; you shall not stir, I promise you.—

you.—Look ye, rascal! tell me, what is become of my letter, or I will be the death of you this instant. [*drawing.*

Spat. [*kneeling.*] Put up your sword, my Lord; put up your sword; and I will tell you every thing in the world. Indeed, I will.

L. Fal. Well, Sir; be quick then! [*putting up his sword.*

Spat. Lady Alton—

L. Fal. Lady Alton! I thought so; go on, Sir.

Spat. Lady Alton, my Lord, desired me to procure her all the intelligence in my power, concerning every thing that past between your Lordship and Amelia.

L. Fal. Well, Sir; what then?

Spat. A little patience, I entreat your Lordship. Accordingly, to oblige her Ladyship—one must oblige the ladies, you know, my Lord—I did keep a pretty sharp look-out, I must confess: and this morning, meeting Monsieur La France, with a letter from your Lordship in his charge, I very readily gave him five guineas of her Ladyship's bounty-money, to put it into my hands.

La Fr. *Ob Diable! me voila perdu!* [*aside.*

L. Fal. How! A bribe, rascal?

[*to La France.*

La Fr. *Ab, Milor!*

[*on his knees.*

Spat.

Spat. At the same price for every letter, he would have sold a whole mail, my Lord.

La Fr. *Ayez pitié de moi!*

[holding up his hands.

L. Fal. Betray the confidence I reposed in you?

Spat. He offered me the letter of his own accord, my Lord.

La Fr. No such ting, *en verité*, *Milor!*

Spat. Very true, I can assure your Lordship.

L. Fal. Well, well; I shall chastise him at my leisure. At present, Sir, do you return me my letter.

Spat. I—I have it not about me, my Lord.

L. Fal. Where is it, rascal? tell me this instant, or—

La Fr. *Lèdy Altón—*

L. Fal. [to *Spat.*] What! has *she* got it? speak, Sirrah!

Spat. She has indeed, my Lord.

L. Fal. Are not you a couple of villains?

La Fr. *Oui, Milor.* }

Spat. *Yes, my Lord!* } *both speak at once.*

L. Fal. [to *Spat.*] But hold, Sir! a word more with you! As you seem to be Lady Alton's chief agent, I must desire some further information from you.

Spat. Any thing in my power, my Lord.

L. Fal.

L. Fal. I can account for her knowledge of Amelia by means of my letter: but how did she discover Sir William Douglas?

Spat. I told her, my Lord.

L. Fal. But how did you discover him yourself?

Spat. By listening, my Lord.

L. Fal. By listening?

Spat. Yes, by listening, my Lord! let me but once be about a house, and I'll engage to clear it, like a ventilator, my Lord. There is not a door to a single apartment in this house, but I have planted my ear at the keyhole.

L. Fal. And were these the means, by which you procured your intelligence?

Spat. Yes, my Lord.

L. Fal. Impossible.

Spat. Oh dear! nothing so easy; this is nothing at all, my Lord! I have given an account of the plays in our Journal, for three months together, without being nearer the stage than the pit-passage; and I have collected the debates of a whole session, for the Magazine, only by attending in the lobby.

L. Fal. Precious rascal!—Ha! who comes here? Lady Alton herself again, as I live!

Spat. [*apart.*] The devil she is! I wish I was out of the house.

Enter Lady ALTON.

L. Alt. What! still here, my Lord? still witnessing to your own shame, and the justice of my resentment?

L. Fal. Yes, I am still here, Madam; and sorry to be made a witness of your cruelty and meanness; of your descending to arts, so much beneath your rank; and practices, so unworthy of your sex.

L. Alt. You talk in riddles, my Lord!

L. Fal. This gentleman shall explain them. Here, Madam! here is the engine of your malice, the instrument of your vengeance, your prime minister, Mr. Spatter.

L. Alt. What have I to do with Mr. Spatter?

L. Fal. To do mischief; to intercept letters, and break them open; to overhear private conversations, and betray them; to—

L. Alt. Have you laid any thing of this kind to my charge, Sir? [*to Spatter.*

Spat. I have been obliged to speak the truth, though much against my will, indeed, Madam.

L. Alt. The truth! thou father of lies, did ever any truth proceed from thee? What! is his Lordship your new patron! A fit Maecenas for thee, thou scandal to the *belles lettres*!

L. Fal.

L. Fal. Your rage at this detection is but a fresh conviction of your guilt.

L. Alt. Do not triumph, monster! you shall still feel the superiority I have over you. The object of your wishes is no longer under your protection; the officers of the government entered the house at the same time with myself, with a warrant to seize both Amelia and her father.

L. Fal. Confusion! Are not they gone then? La France! villain! run, and bring me word!

La Fr. I go, Milor! [Exit.]

L. Alt. Do not flatter yourself with any hopes; they have not escaped; here they are, secured in proper hands.

L. Fal. Death and distraction! now I am completely miserable.

Enter Sir WILLIAM DOUGLAS, AMELIA, OWEN, and Officers.

L. Alt. Yes, your misery is complete indeed; and so shall be my revenge. Oh! your servant, Madam! [turning to Amelia] You now see to what a condition your pride and obstinacy have reduced you. Did not I bid you tremble at the consequences?

Amel. It was here alone that I was vulnerable. [holding her father's hand.] Oh, Madam, [turning to Lady Alton] by the virtues that should adorn your rank, by

the tenderness of your sex, I conjure you, pity my distress! do but release my father; and there are no concessions, however humiliating, which you may not exact from me.

L. Alt. Those concessions now come too late, Madam. If I were even inclined to relieve you, at present it is not in my power. [*haughtily.*] Lord Falbridge perhaps may have more interest. [*with a sneer.*]

L. Fal. Cruel, insulting woman! [*to Lady Alton.*] Do not alarm yourself, my Amelia!—Do not be concerned, Sir! [*to Sir William.*] Your enemies shall still be disappointed. Although ignorant of your arrival, I have for some time past exerted all my interest in your favour, and by the mediation of those still more powerful, I do not despair of success. Your case is truly a compassionate one; and in that breast, from which alone mercy can proceed, thank heaven, there is the greatest reason to expect it.

Sir W. I am obliged to you for your concern, Sir.

L. Fal. Oh, I owe you all this, and much more—But this is no time to speak of my offences, or repentance.

L. Alt. This is mere trifling. I thought you knew on what occasion you came hither, Sir. [*to the Officer.*]

Officer.

Officer. Your reproof is too just, Madam. I attend you, Sir. [*to Sir William.*]

L. Fal. Hold! Let me prevail on you, Sir, [*to the Officer*] to suffer them to remain here till to-morrow morning. I will answer for the consequences.

Officer. Pardon me, my Lord! we should be happy to oblige you; but we must discharge the duty of our office.

L. Fal. Distraction!

Sir W. Come then! we follow you, Sir! Be comforted, my Amelia! for my sake, be comforted! Wretched as I am, your anxiety shocks me more than my own misfortunes.

[*As they are going out, Enter Freeport.*]

Free. Heyday! what now! the officers here again! I thought we had satisfied you this morning. What is the meaning of all this?

Officer. This will inform you, Sir.

[*giving the warrant.*]

Free. How's this? Let me see! [*reading.*] *This is to require you—um um—the bodies of William Ford and Amelia Walton—um—um—suspected persons—um—um—Well, well! I see what this is: but you will accept of bail, Sir.*

Officer. No, Sir; this case is not bailable, and we have already been reprimanded for taking your recognizance this morning.

Sir W. Thou good man! I shall ever retain the most lively sense of your behaviour: but your kind endeavours to preserve the poor remainder of my proscribed life are in vain. We must submit to our destiny.

[*all going.*]

Free. Hold, hold! one word, I beseech you, Sir! [*to the Officer*] a minute or two will make no difference—Bail then, it seems, will not do, Sir?

Officer. No, Sir.

Free. Well, well; then I have something here that will perhaps.

[*feeling in his pocket.*]

L. Fal. How!

L. Alt. What does he mean?

Free. No, it is not there.—It is in t'other pocket, I believe. Here, Sir William! [*producing a parchment.*] Ask the gentleman, if *that* will not do.—But first of all, read it yourself, and let us hear how you like the contents.

Sir W. What do I see! [*opening and perusing it.*] My pardon! the full and free pardon of my offences! Oh heaven! and is it to you then, to you, Sir, that I owe all this?—Thus, thus let me shew my gratitude to my benefactor!

[*falling at his feet.*]

Free. Get up, get up, Sir William! Thank heaven, and the most gracious of monarchs.

monarchs. You have very little obligation to me, I promise you.

Amel. My father restored! Then I am the happiest of women.

L. Fal. A pardon! I am transported.

L. Alt. How's this? a pardon!

Free. Under the great seal, Madam.

L. Alt. Confusion! what! am I baffled at last then? Am I disappointed even of my revenge?—Thou officious fool! [*to Freeport.*] May these wretches prove as great a torment to you, as they have been to me! As for thee, [*to Lord Falbridge*] thou perfidious monster, may thy guilt prove thy punishment! May you obtain the unworthy union you desire! May your wife prove as false to you, as you have been to me! May you be followed, like Orestes, with the furies of a guilty conscience; find your error when it is too late; and die in all the horrors of despair!

[*Exit.*]

Free. There goes a woman of quality for you! what little actions! and what a great soul!—Ha! Master Spatter! where are you going? [*to Spatter, who is sneaking off.*]

Spat. Following the Muse, Sir! [*pointing after Lady Alton.*] But if you have any further commands, or his Lordship should have occasion for me to write his Epithalamium—

L. Fal. Peace, wretch! sleep in a whole skin, and be thankful! I would sollicit mercy myself, and have not leisure to punish you. Be gone, Sir!

Spat. I am obliged to your Lordship—This affair will make a good article for the Evening-Post to-night, however.

[*Aside, and Exit.*

Sir W. How happy has this reverse of fortune made me!—But my surprise is almost equal to my joy. May we beg you, Sir, [*to Freeport*] to inform us how your benevolence has effected what seems almost a miracle in my favour?

Free. In two words then, Sir William, this happy event is chiefly owing to your old friend, the late Lord Brumpton.

Sir W. Lord Brumpton!

Free. Yes; honest Owen there told me, that his Lordship had been employed in solliciting your pardon. Did not you, Owen?

Owen. I did, Sir.

Free. Upon hearing that, and perceiving the danger you were in, I went immediately to the present Lord Brumpton; who is a very honest fellow, and one of the oldest acquaintance I have in the world. He, at my instance, immediately made the necessary application; and guess how agreeably we were surprised to hear that the late Lord had already been successful, and that

that the pardon had been made out, on the very morning of the day his Lordship died. Away went I, as fast as a pair of horses could carry me, to fetch it; and should certainly have prevented this last arrest, if the warrant to apprehend you, as dangerous persons, had not issued under your assumed names of William Ford and Amelia Walton, against whom the information had been laid. But, however, it has only served to prevent your running away, when the danger was over, for at present, Sir William, thank heaven and his majesty, you are a whole man again; and you have nothing to do but to make a legal appearance, and to plead the pardon I have brought you, to absolve you from all informations.

L. Fal. Thou honest excellent man! How happily have you supplied, what I failed to accomplish!

Free. Ay, I heard that your Lordship had been busy.—You had more friends at Court than one, Sir William, I promise you.

Sir W. I am overwhelmed with my sudden good fortune, and am poor even in thanks. Teach me, Mr. Freeport, teach me how to make some acknowledgement for your extraordinary generosity!

Free.

Free. I'll tell you what, Sir William. Notwithstanding your daughter's pride, I took a liking to her, the moment I saw her.

L. Fal. Ha! What's this!

Free. What's the matter, my Lord?

L. Fal. Nothing. Go on, Sir!

Free. Why then, to confess the truth, I am afraid that my benevolence, which you have all been pleased to praise so highly, had some little leaven of self-interest in it; and I was desirous to promote Amelia's happiness more ways than one.

L. Fal. Then I am the veriest wretch that ever existed.—But take her, Sir! for I must confess that you have deserved her by your proceedings; and that I, fool and villain that I was, have forfeited her by mine. [going.]

Free. Hold, hold! one word before you go, if you please, my Lord! You may kill yourself for aught I know, but you shan't lay your death at my door, I promise you. I had a kindness for Amelia, I must confess; but in the course of my late negotiation for Sir William, hearing of your Lordship's pretensions, I dropt all thoughts of her. It is a maxim with me, to do good wherever I can, but always to abstain

abstain from doing mischief.—Now as I can't make the lady happy myself, I would fain put her into the hands of those that can.—So, if you would oblige me, Sir William, let me join these two young folks together, [*joining their hands*] and do you say Amen to it.

Sir W. With all my heart!—You can have no objection, Amelia.

[*Amelia bursts into tears.*]

L. Fal. How bitterly do those tears reproach me! It shall be the whole business of my future life to atone for them.

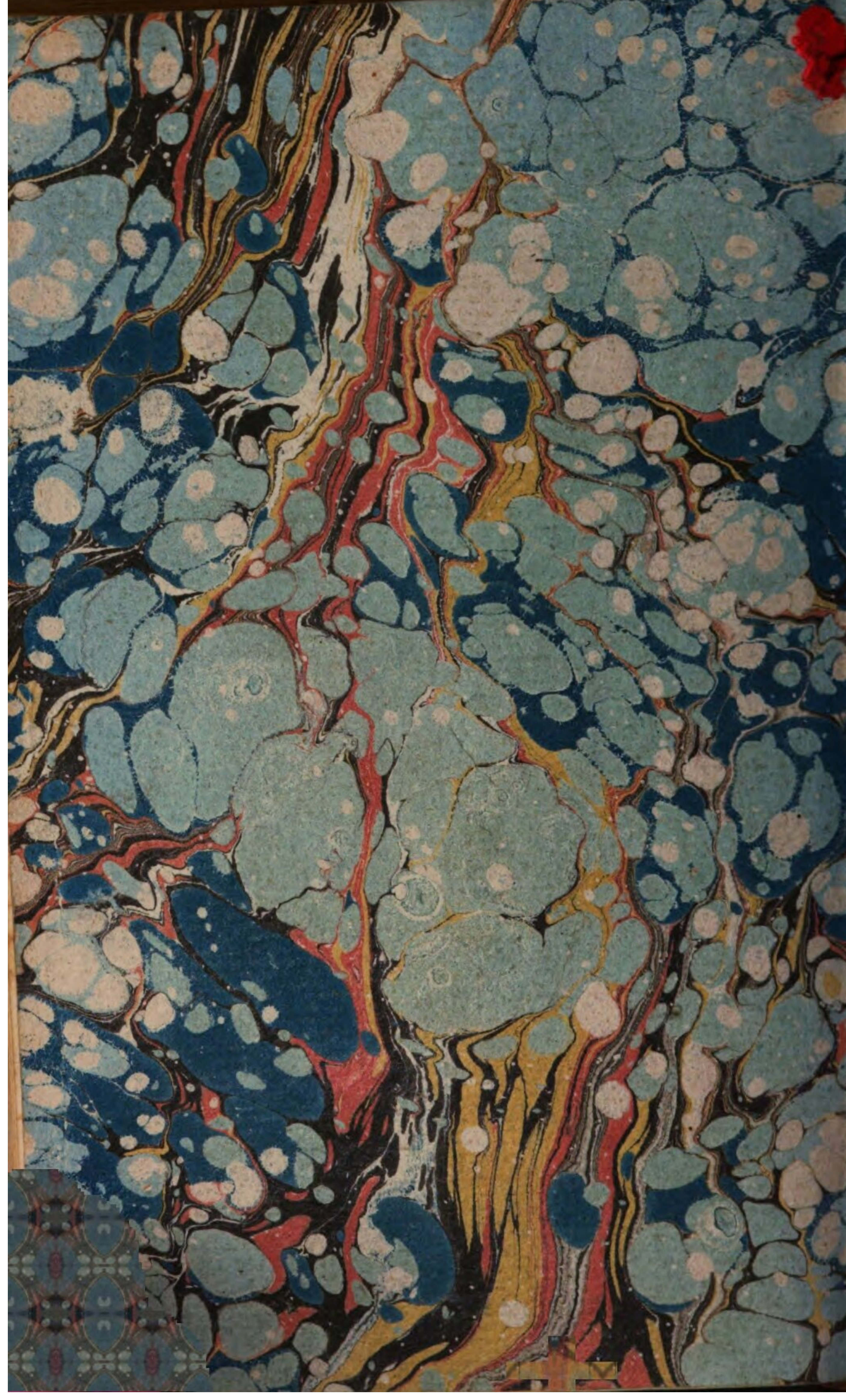
Amel. Your actions this day, and your solicitude for my father, have redeemed you in my good opinion; and the consent of Sir William, seconded by so powerful an advocate as Mr. Freeport, cannot be contended with. Take my hand, my Lord! a virtuous passion may inhabit the purest breast; and I am not ashamed to confess, that I had conceived a partiality for you, till your own conduct turned my heart against you; and if my resentment has given you any pain, when I consider the occasion, I must own that I cannot repent it.

L. Fal. Mention it no more, my love, I beseech you! You may justly blame your lover, I confess; but I will never give you cause to complain of your husband.

Free.

Free. I don't believe you will. I give you joy, my Lord! I give you all joy. As for you, Madam, [*to Amelia*] do but shew the world that you can bear prosperity, as well as you have sustained the shocks of adversity, and there are few women, who may not wish to be an *Amelia*.

F I N I S.









A Collection Of New Plays

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